

THEOLOGY OF SOCIETY

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More Essays in Christian Polity

by

V. A. DEMANT

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PREFACE



A writer on the themes treated of in this book is bound to feel that anything written before the recent war or even in the earlier phases of it must suffer from a certain flatness and tepid irrelevance to burning topical questions. Two considerations have served to overcome some reluctance to publish a collection of essays and speeches which have appeared before over a period of twelve years. In the first place, I am old enough to have learnt that issues which at the time they arise look as if they will completely transform the nature of the human problem for the individual or society concerned, very soon take their place as particular variations of perennial and recurring problems, and do not alter the configuration of the human situation nearly so rapidly or so deeply as one thought they would. For there is never nothing but crisis in the world, though there is little else in print now, and crisis is only felt as such because some continuity of life and thought runs through the most catastrophic upheavals. Besides, the bewilderment of our time is due, in my view, largely to its mind being touched almost entirely by what is topical, the multifarious events of our history having no interrelating thought in men's consciousness, except perhaps the remnants of the mythology of 'Progress'. I believe therefore that there is some use in issuing together various treatments of the same theme, though most of them do not fully envisage the crucial state of 'Christendom' as it is at this moment. The theme is the problem of the Western World which retains some real adherence to the European Tradition, in respect of its conscious aims, but which is losing or destroying the culture out of which those aims grew. A dominant element in that culture has been the outlook on the nature of existence given by historic Chris-

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tuinity. In *The Religious Prospect* (F. Muller, 1939) I have discussed at some length the replacement of that outlook by an alien one in more theological and philosophical terms than these essays display.

A second reason why I have eventually disregarded a disinclination to issue writings some of which I had been inclined to regard as ephemeral and dated, is a reminder frequently being brought to the attention of one who utters his mind in print, in pulpit and on platform, namely that what appears stale and trite to oneself does in fact sometimes prove to have brought illumination to others. That is both a humbling and hopeful discovery.

A similar collection of writings covering a period of ten years appeared in 1936 under the title *Christian Polity* (Faber & Faber). Though in no sense a prelude (or whatever is the opposite to a sequel) to this book, that volume, less homogeneous and limited in scope as it was, contains more specific treatment of some issues raised in this one. In that sense only does the later thought here presuppose that of the earlier work.

The three short papers on Kierkegaard are outside the main subject of the other essays. They are added not only for convenience, but also to register my conviction that all problems, even one of so public a nature as the relation of Faith and Society, are ultimately problems only to individuals, and therefore that they can truly and objectively be handled only by persons who have discovered their true individuality. And individuality is, as Kierkegaard repeats, a unique relationship to the Eternal.

The Revd. Dr. E. R. Hardy, Associate Professor of Church History at Berkeley Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A., performed an act of friendship by reading the proofs of this book while I was temporarily on the teaching staff of that institution. I am, and readers should be, grateful to him for correcting errors and making many useful suggestions. Any faults that remain are my own responsibility.

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I

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF HUMAN SOLIDARITY



I. THE GOSPEL AND SOLIDARITY

The Christian Religion is a religion of redemption, a gospel. It is good news, not good advice. The good news is that God, who is the source and end of the created world, is by an act of divine initiative restoring things to their true nature. In Jesus Christ, God the Son, the creative power of God pierces, purifies and transforms the creation. Redemption is always a restoration.

Thus, while the Christian Religion is primarily a gospel, it is also a philosophy. This Christian philosophy contains three axioms. The first is that in the actual world things are not true to their essential nature. There has been a Fall. The second is that 'the good' of anything is a recovery of its true nature, and that this recovery is made, not by any self-improvement, but by the act of God. There follows the third principle, that the true nature of any created thing is only sustained when it is held to its true end by supernatural direction and power.¹

The good life is therefore in the Christian Faith something to be recovered rather than created by man. It is part of his essential being. Redemption through Christ effects a recognition rather than a discovery. Man's true nature is brought back with a price.²

This Christian outlook upon the nature of things as they are is opposed to that of the world. The world at its best is idealist in defining the good and Pelagian in its effort to achieve it. On its view, knowledge of the good consists in the right ideas, and

¹ St. Thomas Aquinas: *De Malo*, Q. 5, a. 1.

² 1 Cor. vi. 20, vii. 23.

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the moral life is a problem of stimulating the 'sluggish' will. By contrast, the Christian is a realist, he regards the good as an objective fact. It exists; it is not an ideal. It is the life of God and men in God and things in God. Men are appropriating it or rejecting it, entering the Kingdom of God or excluding themselves from it.

Human solidarity, which is the subject of this pamphlet, is part of the good life. 'How should our celestial City have ever come to its origin, development or perfection, unless the saints all live in sociable union?' writes Saint Augustine.¹ Solidarity as an aspect of the good life is therefore, in the Christian view, to be understood in the light of the theological principles outlined above. Firstly, it is of the essence of reality. Social living is in the nature of things. Secondly, denials of it are not imperfect developments but positive disruptions. Disunion is sin. Thirdly, the re-creation of solidarity is a task of redemption. It is not a problem of creating union out of the materials of discord, but of combating the forces which disrupt solidarity, by the power inherent in a return to the source of solidarity, namely God.

The world at the present time is being bound together in its own way: its bonds unite men in a strained and delusive interdependence which reveals deadlocks and conflicts liable to come to the surface at any moment. The Church, with her own problem of disunion, has the divine commission to show the true nature of human solidarity. Perhaps the secret answer to the Church's problem of disunion will be revealed just in so far as it brings out of its treasures, both new and old, the secret of human solidarity. Let the Church cease being content to make the sign of the cross upon the world's means to unity and, while blessing its true aims in this direction, proclaim its own distinctive doctrine of solidarity to a world distracted for the loss of it.

II. THE PRIORITY OF SOLIDARITY

That solidarity, the fullest type of community, is in the nature of reality is implicit in the Christian Tradition. Not solidarity

¹ *The City of God*, xix. 5. The whole of Book XIX is important for this point.

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but discord is the problem. From the New Testament onwards there is continuous witness to the truth that all actual efforts to express justice in human laws and conduct are attempts to approach the justice and harmony stamped on the creation by the creator. Dr. A. J. Carlyle summarizes this teaching: 'There is a law behind all the positive ordinances of human society, a law which is written in the hearts of all men, drawing them to good, forbidding them to do evil, a law which is itself the expression of the reason and nature of God himself, and that from this all the true laws of men are derived'¹ The words of Saint Paul² about those who 'do by nature the things of the law' is taken over by the fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries, like Saint Hilary, Saint Ambrose and Saint Augustine.³ Origen conceives the law of nature to be the law of God against a background of conviction that there is an ultimate solidarity between all that thinks and feels; he regards the very multiplicity of created things as a reflection of the perfection of their ultimate unity. Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas expound at length the truth that discord is an enemy opposing the unity which is the ground of existence. It is part of the whole catholic teaching that love is the fundamental power in the universe. Even hate only comes in because the things men hate are in the way of those satisfactions which men seek, and all seeking is some form of love, even when perverted. Both declare even war to be a means by which men seek a more satisfactory peace.⁴ Augustine observes that 'he that bewails the loss of his natural peace has his light from the remainder of that peace, which is left to him, keeping his nature and him in concord'. And as there cannot be contention without some peace, the latter is more elemental. And some famous passages of Saint Thomas carry this truth into the realm of good and evil generally. *Quod malum in aliquo bono fundatur*.⁵

Community is in the nature of God's world. This means, in the first place, that mere difference and separateness are not

¹ *Medieval Political Theory in the West*, Vol I, ch. ix.

² Rom. ii. 12-14.

³ For reference see Carlyle, *op. cit.*

⁴ *The City of God*, XIX, 12; *Summa Theol.*, II, ii. Q. 29. 2.

⁵ *Contra Gentiles*, lib. iii., cap. 7, 10, 11, 15.

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the cause of conflict and disunion, as our idealists, Wellsians, Esperantists, and world-planners imagine. Even strangeness in other men and things is not unfriendly unless there is cause for fear, which springs from detection of aggressive motives like those in ourselves. Disunion often springs less from my ignorance of another's actions and thoughts than from my knowing them only too well. Difference and separateness are aspects of creation, and they are as much the grounds of co-operation, interdependence, and functional service as of disunion.¹ It depends entirely upon the things men do and say whether separateness or closeness makes the more for unity or for conflict—and upon what they do and say in matters other than their relation to one another. Upon the inner attitude of man and woman to life, death, money, art, bliss, religion and so on, much more fundamentally than upon their attitude to each other or to love, depends the real success of love and marriage. And nations are dragged together in economic interdependence, and their leaders cry for more recognition of it, while a false order in their economic means and purposes so makes for internal disharmony that the interdependence is forced upon them as an escape from their own failure. This results in a more concealed and dangerous rivalry. What I am as a whole person determines whether I am at unity with my neighbour when I meet him, and not merely what I think or feel with regard to him. The fact that men and groups of men are separate and unlike is not, therefore, the cause of disunion, for this is an aspect of the creation. There is no problem in the Creation, for the Creation is not the Fall. This deduction from the truth that solidarity is elemental in the created order is of supreme importance both for the problem of church unity and for the illumination that the Church can shed upon the problem of human unity in general.

Solidarity, then, is not an ethical ideal, but a fact; one of those aspects of the 'givenness' of things upon which von Hugel was never tired of insisting. Everyone agrees that man ought to be a social being. The world, too, agrees in a theoretical way that he is a social being, but tends to forget it in practice. Christian philosophy insists that there is an ultimate identity

¹ See I Cor. xii. for Diversities of Gifts

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between the 'ought' and the 'is', that what man ought to be that he truly is.¹ And it should be remembered that Catholicism, in its insistence upon the family as the type of all society, upholds a unity built upon what the relationship of the members is by nature. Our Lord tells his disciples what they *are*. branches of the vine, children of the Father, and so on. And Saint Paul's picture of the community of the Church is that of members of a body, with diversities, united by their very being. 'Hommes, ne cherchez pas à socialiser la vie de l'esprit. Elle veut être elle-même sociale, elle ne peut que là'²

III. THE DESTRUCTION OF SOLIDARITY

In the actual world, community of living is by no means universal. It seems to be a rare and frail phenomenon. We find it hard to live in fellowship, and when we look at society we find it cleft by conflicts of will and interests. It is easy then to jump to the conclusion that society itself is an artificial and difficult achievement. The moralist is inclined to conclude that because moral effort is required to combat forces which tend to break up society, therefore society is the creation of moral effort.

For religion, however, the good life is given, to be rejected or accepted. It exists objectively in God. The Christian Faith expresses this in the doctrine of the creation, which does not exhaust the being of God, of redemption, which offers to man what he has rejected; and of sin and grace, which are the subjective aspects of the rejection and the offer. Moral effort is only truly possible and fruitful to the soul after it is in grace. The good life, given to man from above, brings about the moral struggle, it is not created by it. Medicine is proceeding to find that the pain and discomfort of disease are the body's fight with the attacking influence. But it would be foolish to

¹ For this point see A. E. Taylor, *Faith of a Moralist*, 1st Series, ch. xi. Cf. von Hügel, *Essays and Addresses*, 2nd Series, Essay iv, Part iv, p. 111 ff. For a psychological expression by a Catholic psychologist see R. Allers, *The Psychology of Character*, ch. xi.

² J. Maritain: *Du Régime Temporel et de la Liberté*, Essay I. English Translation. *Freedom in the Modern World*

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say that pain is in the nature of health. And it would be as foolish to say that the social obligation involved in solidarity is itself the product of painful and heroic struggle. Professor A. F. Taylor's *Faith of a Moralist* and Professor Kenneth Kirk's *Vision of God* are both monuments to the truth that struggle, heroism, disinterestedness, sacrifice, if mistaken for the good life itself, are dangerous and a subtle form of subjectivism—often of a moralistic atheism— which virtually denies the imperfections of the soul. And M. Bergson has reminded us not to confuse the fact of moral and social bonds, many forms of which exist without conscious or painful effort, with the resistance we have to put up when spontaneous harmony is threatened.¹ And the whole doctrine of 'fruition' and 'enjoyment of God' in Augustine, Bernard, Boethius, Aquinas and Dante implies that the attainment of perfection puts an end to the seeking. To confound the nature of the good life with the striving for it not only suffuses the moral life with a priggish insincerity, it destroys the springs of all fruitful moral effort.²

It is because modern secularism— and some ancient forms of it— is riddled with this heresy that it is difficult to recapture the Christian doctrine of solidarity as something given in creation. And, of course, any doctrine of solidarity to be of practical help must deal with the forces which break it up and the possibility of defeating them. 'Our sinful world is the scene of a conflict between opposed forces: this conflict determines the existence of the organic universe, it is the central fact of the social world of man and would seem also to be carried on in the world of spirits, good and evil.'³

It follows from the axiom of the essential existence of society as an aspect of the Creator and creation that social evil, that which hinders solidarity, is not merely failure to achieve; it is a positively disruptive force. 'An enemy hath done this.' The tendency to disrupt society, which runs through human history alongside of the building up of more inclusive group loyalties,

¹ H. Bergson: *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, ch. i.

² Cf. P. H. Wicksteed: *The Religion of Time and the Religion of Eternity* (Essex Hall Lecture).

³ N. Berdyaev: *Christianity and Class War*, ch. 1. Cf. Article, 'Dialectics and Prophecy', by the present writer in *Christian Polity*, 1936.

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must be due to some perversion of that mobility and freedom which is the prerogative of spiritual creatures. In other words, it is sin. Sin is possible only to a being with that power over creation which on earth man distinctively possesses, the power to say No to God. Sin is the act of the creature, using that relative measure of freedom with which he is endowed to claim the absolute right of the Creator. It is the attempt to impose oneself upon reality, to refuse the humbling necessity of recognizing the reality of all the other facts of the Creator and creation, which are not oneself. That is why the end of sin is tragedy, for reality cannot be beaten. Man can only break himself against it. But on the way he can pervert human society and history. The essence of sin is seeking that which is forbidden by the constitution of God's world. In Father Thornton's more philosophical language, sin is the attempt to reach absolute actuality by the finite spirit.¹

How is conflict to be traced to sin? For so traced it must be. Christian Theology has nothing to do with any theory that presupposes man to be by nature an aggressive individualist and to be gradually evolving into a social being. Nor, in fact, has the most penetrating anthropology² and psychology.³ Saint Augustine tells us, in connection with his stealing fruit as a boy, which he did not want and which he threw away, that the doing of what is forbidden means a secret, if fictitious, triumph over the laws of being, the illusion of one's own greatness and power. It partakes of the sin of Lucifer. *Eritis sicut dei* is the essence of all temptation; and pride, as the Catholic Church has always taught, is the root of all sin. But sin sets up a conflict in man, for he is by nature a creature among other creatures, the key of whose life is in God. He is haunted by the ghost of his true self. That conflict is intolerable, and he tries to resolve it by changing his relations with other creatures—particularly his fellow-men. But they do not easily submit, and in fact cannot be merely tools for another's cure. So conflict arises between men, and it ranges from submerged indif-

¹ *The Incarnate Lord*

² W. J. Perry *The Growth of Civilization*, Charles Hose *Natural Man*; J. Elliot Smith *Human Nature*

³ Especially the works of Jung, Adler and Tugant Burrow.

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ference and snobbery to open clashes and war. A new egoism arises to justify and fortify the conflict, and it is this resulting egoism that non-Christian idealism is always mistaking for the cause of conflict.

Men do not commonly want conflict, but they often want certain satisfactions which lead to conflict and rivalry. Redemption brings conviction that such desires can be renounced without loss to true life, that these supposed satisfactions can be had in life in God, or that they can be achieved in concord with others by changing the conditions. A bad liver is a personal internal disorder, and it has led to many a domestic catastrophe because the sufferer has projected his discomfort on to some imagined failure on the part of his family. Poverty, insecurity, and the need to export more than it imports, are internal disorders of a nation, and they continually lead to rivalry and war, both by the impulse to break up an intolerable peace and to vanquish other nations' resistance to one's own expansion-cure.

It is written in the Epistle of Saint James 'Whence come wars and whence come fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your pleasures *that war in your members*?' Ye lust, and have not; ye kill and covet and cannot obtain; ye fight and war; ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss . . . ' Here are not primarily hateful, aggressive or rivalrous motives, but interior demands and conflicts which lead to rivalry. Saint James shows that conflict between men is an attempt to solve an interior problem by external means. So it is with groups, associations, nations, and especially governments. Dissension between persons and groups is the product of internal disorders. St. Thomas makes a clear and useful distinction between concord and peace. 'Concord, properly speaking, is between one man and another, in so far as the will of various hearts agree together in consenting to the same thing. Now the heart of one man may tend to diverse things . . . in so far as one and the same appetitive power tends to diverse objects of appetite which it cannot obtain all at the same time. Now the union of such movements is essential to peace. . . ' ¹ This is to say that without a right

¹ *Summa Theol.*, II, ii Q. 29. 1 and 2.

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ordering of human life within the soul or within a social group there will be no peace and though there can be a limited 'concord in evil between wicked men', the wickedness means attack upon some other part of the creation. The roots of conflict are, therefore, not primarily in the relation between the parts, but in those disturbances within the parts which make their distinctions lines of conflict with one another

Internal conflicts arise from rebellion against God and against one's true nature. It is a widespread fact to-day that the activities men and nations pursue, independently of their attitude to each other, lead them often to be bad neighbours in spite of much good will for peace and quietness. The false order of living makes for aggressiveness when 'interests' are threatened. But they are threatened from within more fundamentally than from without. A false order of living is the result of man erecting himself into his own lawgiver, or one of his activities into the end of his being, as when he regards himself in action or thought as existing for labour, or industry, or the state, or sex, or æsthetics, or power. Man is by nature a creature, and also a spiritual being with an eternal end. Any act which denies his creature-hood, or makes him the lackey of *one* of his activities, gives rise to internal and then to external conflicts. In brief, his relation to God must be right if his relation to his neighbours is to be good. Disunion is sin in fact and in origin.

IV. THE RE-CREATION OF SOLIDARITY

We have now to see how this doctrine throws light upon the way men do form communities in the actual world, upon the limits and frailty of all social living, and upon the need for supernatural grace for the full expression of solidarity.

There are roughly four degrees of solidarity in the actual human world. They are, of course, never quite distinct, but merge together in countless ways.

1. There is first the crude mutual dependence of persons and groups. Parent and child, teacher and taught, lord and slave, policeman and burglar, patriot and foe, bankrupt employer and out-of-work employee, are examples of it. This kind of relationship is reciprocal, and some forms of it are clearly be-

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tween parties dependent upon each other by their opposition. It is a platitude that the modern world is increasingly interdependent in this sense. Great evils follow either from refusing to recognize this mutual relation as a fact, or from mistaking recognition of it for true solidarity. The policeman and criminal are dependent upon each other for their movements; the moneylender and the needy are mutually related. Neither of these pairs of human beings are in a relation of solidarity. Interdependence of nations often grows out of a mutual parasitism instead of strength, and so becomes a link which is oppressive and irritating. And even such a natural reciprocal relation as a family can be a seething cauldron of secret hatreds, which become the more virulent as the interdependence is closer.

2. The relationship of sharing a common life or experience is a stage nearer solidarity. We may call it fellowship. Examples of it are gregariousness or the market-place feeling; racial and national consciousness; what is expressed by 'the old school tie'; the pleasure of recognizing 'a bit of the old country' in a strange place; or the feeling of getting back to one's mother. This sentiment has a large place in devotion to 'good old-fashioned Church of England religion'. The bonds created by sex between man and woman, by class consciousness, and even by 'our common humanity' when it becomes conscious in the presence of a non-human enemy such as earthquake or shipwreck, are all expressions of persons experiencing in common a given layer of reality. But fellowship is not solidarity, though, like the mutual relationship, it is an indispensable basis of it. A great many theories have assumed that it is the principle of solidarity. Some base all society upon a hypothetical herd instinct.¹ The theory which assumes fellowship to be the principle of solidarity takes a more serious form in the theory of society as an organism.² And when 'the social organism' is considered not only as a fact of existence but as a moral goal

¹ Grotius *De Jure Belli et Pacis*; Prolog, par. 6, McDougall *Social Psychology*; Trotter. *Herd Instinct in Peace and War*, N. P. Williams. *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*

² Otto Gierke. *Natural Law and the Theory of Society* (tr. Ernest Barker), W. H. R. Rivers: *Psychology and Politics*

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we get the philosophies underlying Fascism and National Socialism.¹

3. Solidarity demands not only the mutual relationship, not only fellowship, but also common purposes. Man is not merely a biological but also a purposive being, and in consequence there enters into every relation of persons throughout history the factor of culture or civilization. Culture includes all those purposes that men pursue, over and above the task of preserving their existence. It implies the notion that life itself is only worth having if it is a certain kind of life. It comprises all spiritual aims and moral codes, the activity of manufacture, the pursuit of knowledge, the cultivation of art, the acquirement of skill, the courting of risk, and a host of other activities.

While the disruptive effect of sin is such that man does not naturally unite with man as man, and in fact any move merely to get together without any superior aim always breaks down, yet men do unite in order to realize certain values over and above mere social cohesion. Culture, or common purpose, has an influence upon society which is a corrective of the dissociating force of sin. The pull of common interests, with no consciously socializing motive, is the bond of the most vital forms of human association. Unfortunately its power is commonly ignored by the politician and reformer. Their concern has primarily been aroused when associations break down or get in each other's way, and their job of mending the wreckage gives them a false view of the nature of social reality. They see their task as the arduous one of making men get together. But solidarity has come time and again, with relatively little binding machinery, when common interests of culture, civilization or religion have been induced. Society is recovered as the by-product of common tasks which have no specific socializing impulse. To will society is not to will to be social, but to will what others will. Cultural and scientific interests, true theological discussions, a common job like the International Postal Union, unite people of many nations and races in a real international community, where the thought of being international does not enter the head. Men do not think about brotherhood

¹ Hegel *Rechts philosophie*; Bosanquet *Philosophical Theory of the State*, etc., Griener Op cit

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when they are acting as brothers in a piece of team work, they think about the job. Human community can only exist in the common thing. We do not associate directly with others. Friendship and love and fellowship all break down for two reasons, unless there is an interest or purpose above them which can tide the parties over the breakdowns of purely mutual regard. The two reasons are that to one man, not being God, the individuality of the other man always remains an unknowable mystery, and that owing to the Fall of Adam the natural man does not love disinterestedly. But through the mediation of the common thing, association and a measure of solidarity is possible. And true community building proceeds by extension of community bonds that already exist, not by drawing ideal lines round mankind with the incantation that 'we are all one'.

4. One of the strongest types of solidarity shows the limits of all purely human social living. This is *militant solidarity*, and it arises when groups who are united in some of the last mentioned ways become a solid will in attack upon or resistance to an external force. The tragedy of sinful man is revealed in the fact that solidarity is most securely induced by external conflict. One of the stimulants of war is that social living, which is a necessity of the soul, is too often enfeebled in peacetime and that solidarity is induced by attack. This tragedy invades even the Church: leaders of Christian movements can be heard to say that their society has little to do because ecclesiastical opponents are not very active, and unions formed for defensive or propaganda purposes are manifestly in danger of disintegration when a desired liberty or victory is achieved.

While the social effects of the fiction that each person or group is its own law, which is the meaning of sin, is corrected by the cultural forces of association, sin seeks to invade associations themselves and use culture in its own service. An American thinker has posed this problem in its stark nakedness, and it may never be shirked by the Church in the shallow belief that personal moral behaviour can by mere education be extended to groups. 'Every immediate loyalty is a potential danger to higher and more inclusive loyalties and an opportunity for the expression of a sublimated egoism.'¹

¹ Reinhold Niebuhr: *Moral Man and Immoral Society*.

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While civilization develops more exacting associations and institutions, we have an undercurrent of increasing conflict, not between persons and groups directly, but between association and interests. The socially disruptive force in man discovers the benefits of association. That is the secret of the frailty of civilization. Its conflicts are more violent, deep-cutting, and disruptive as civilization advances, because the anti-social motives of men are more hidden than in direct man to man antagonisms. The world to-day presents a spectacle of conflicts which are superficially between men, classes, and nations. At a deeper level we see a conflict between the interests and activities of all peoples affected by our civilization. It is a gigantic conflict between productive, financial, political techniques, and the antagonism of territorial and functional groups are just the spasms of tortured mankind to escape from its inner contradictions.

Community can then in a measure be re-created in the natural sphere by the pull of common interests.¹ But cultural and social unities are themselves liable to be invaded by evil and become demonic. There is then no way out by merely enlarging or consolidating civilization.

V. THE CHURCH AS THE TYPE OF TRUE SOLIDARITY

When conflicts become tragic, that is when they cannot be resolved merely by the desire for solidarity, mere socializing machinery is useless. For such tragic conflict reveals, behind the opposition of groups, the cross-purposes of the same men and peoples. These cross-purposes are signs of a false relationship to God. When the uniting forces of culture break down and themselves become disruptive, nothing short of an immediate, direct reorientation, a *metanoia*, with regard to God as man's end can recover solidarity and preserve man from destruction. But such spiritual unity and singleness cannot be reached by an extension of those unities which dominate the

¹ See St. Thomas' 'On Peace', *Summa Theol.*, I, b, and Dante. *De Monarchia*, Book I, chs. xv and xvi, for a fine statement of unity as the fruit of common and single aims.

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secular field; the more successful these are in uniting some men the greater danger they are to mankind as a whole, for man without roots in God is not at unity with himself.

But solidarity can come as a thief in the night, for, in fact, it does not come into existence as the result of the human quest, but is there before the beginning of it. It exists essentially in man as the creature of God. The only effort demanded of him is to admit his creature-hood, to renounce his torturing activity to make his own world. That is at once the most difficult because it is the most easy. For to bid the spiritual and relatively free being to renounce his fictitious absolutism is to bid him give up all the fabricated difficulties which give him his pride of life.

It is that surrender to which Christ calls man; and to make it a true surrender it has to be made not to the heavenly Christ, but to Christ in his humanly disfigured body, the Church. To receive the truth about myself from the sinful man who is my fellow in the Church, that alone is full surrender. *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* is not so much a warning to those outside as a proclamation of the nature of redemption. Christians do not accept redemption by faith, and then join with others who do the same, and so form the Church. Membership in the Church is an essential element in the surrender to Christ. To join an ideal brotherhood would be no act of faith but an expression of one's own judgment; but to take my life into the tiresome pettiness, the formality, conventionality, the stuffiness and all the other human grime of a congregation of Christ's Church and surrender to him there, that is the surrender of faith, and it is also the act of becoming a social being.

The Church is the only true community on earth because its bond of union is not human, and the common life it shares, the common purposes of its members, are not their own; they are given from beyond. In the Church men are one body, not because they like one another or even need one another, nor because they happen to agree upon this or that truth. They are one because they are all confronted with an objective fact from the eternal world, Jesus Christ. In him they know their sinfulness and their only true end. And knowing that they only really exist by the love of God in Christ, they know themselves

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to be only truly living persons in that they love. As Dante sums up the Paradiso, to see God is to see as God sees, that is in love. This love demands truth as well as mercy 'Mercy and truth have met together'¹ To love my neighbour as myself requires that I know how truly to love myself It means a right ordering of all my activities, physical, mental, occupational, cultural, in an order which ministers to the response of my whole being to God and to all things in God. This rightness or *justitia* is an essential ingredient in charity according to the Catholic doctors, and we have seen that where it is absent in persons or peoples solidarity does not arrive in spite of all good will 'Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.'²

The Church knows what true solidarity means because it fulfils four conditions in a way that no merely human society can do.

1. It knows that solidarity is a fact, something given. God is the source of all society, and human solidarity is an appropriation of that which is given, not the free construction of man's mind and will. 'The love of which the New Testament speaks,' writes Emil Brunner, 'has its origin not in man but in God, in the fact, i.e., that God sets man within his love by his Word. This, then, may be called Christian love—the mutual correspondence (if you take the word in its literal sense, the *co*-respondence) in responsibility—which is based on God's calling in love. This is the idea of the Communion of Saints. . . . The Gospel is not an imperative; it is an indicative. The imperative which we have in our own conscience does not give the strength to do what we ought to do. If the Gospel consisted in an ideal and in demands it would not be an *Eu-angelion* but a *Dys-angelion*, that is—sad tidings. It is an *Eu-angelion* or good tidings because the first thing it does is not to demand but to give. It gives to the World what the World neither has nor knows, it discloses the secret of God's loving purpose, the message of reconciliation; thus laying a foundation for community.'³

¹ Ps. lxxxv

² Ibid

³ *The Word and the World* (S.C.M.), p. 125, see the whole chapter, 'The Church and Society'.

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2. Beyond sharing a common life which is given, and being mutually dependent in accepting it, members of the Communion of Saints know that solidarity springs from a common purpose. Christians are united in a common purpose which has no temporal limit 'They are not concerned to 'get-together', but to worship God. But the worshipful creature is at once at unity with the whole hierarchy of being, for he is at unity with the Creator. By cutting through all the complexities erected by his luciferic fantasies, man the worshipper is instantly, as the lightning shineth in the east and is seen even in the west, a social being, for that is his nature. As Christ in his blessed Incarnation pierced through all forms of created order and became, not society, not a culture, not an idea, but man-- and not only man, but a man, *this* man, born of *this* woman, a concrete individual in all his social relations -- nay, more, in the Blessed Sacrament enthrones himself even in the material -- so union with Christ, which is of the nature of the Church as the priest of earthly society, redeems society at each level of its being.

3. Members of the Church know (a) that in true solidarity each loyalty is a bridge, not a barrier, to a larger one, and (b) that every step in perfecting solidarity must be good in itself.

(a) Unity springs from common consciousness of the thing willed, not from consciousness of being united. Hence the soul is directed to the positive purposes of association, opposition on the part of other groups may have to be encountered, but it is not the reason for uniting. Christians will therefore always be looking for the positive side of those loyalties which in the secular sphere slip continually into being merely negative, protective and resistant. When nationality slips into nationalism, personality into individualism, Conservatism into anti-Socialism, craft guilds into trade unions, religious societies into ecclesiastical defence corps, then their character, instead of expressing itself in a positive task, becomes chiefly marked by difference from or resistance to other things. The less a person or people is conscious of its own attainments and meaning, the more it will emphasize its dissociation from or contrast to others. So most secular loyalties become barriers to wider ones. The Christian knows that in true personality and in true soli-

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clarity men think and speak of the things worth doing, not about their being persons, or of their being different, or of their being brotherly. And in true nationality a people is chiefly aware of what it does, not of its contrast with other peoples. Oppositions and barriers arise in the soul of a man and a people in direct proportion as his or its inner content of life is weak.

(b) Moreover a Christian knows that every moment and event has its own moral quality, and will never allow that a false move now can make for a true society at an undated millennium. Starvation to-day for the sake of plenty the day after to-morrow (Capitalism); the Servile State to-day for the sake of the glorious freedom of Anarchist Communism in the days to come (Communism); Toleration of injustice for the sake of 'pie in the sky when you die' (Pietism), are wicked deceptions with which a Christian will have nothing to do. A true community regards the quality of eternal life in each act and event as significant, for the arch connecting all acts and events is God.

4 Members of the Body of Christ know that all true solidarity springs out of the strength, not the weakness, of the parties. The modern world starts from the autonomous individual and tries to make him a social being, or from the disintegrated state and tries to make it an international co-operator. But it cannot be done. Men and nations cannot enter into true social relationship because man is empty and the state is the lackey of its money lords. All the creaking effort to be brotherly, social and international, is the external attempt to make up for an internal defect, a defect of unity with the whole of reality. 'If a man is to give he must first own.' If he is to be a good neighbour he must be a true person; he is a true person only by his relation to God and his activities in God. So with occupations, cultural societies, and nations. Otherwise relationships are grasping instead of helping. The second commandment of the Gospel rests upon the first.

VI THE PROBLEM OF CHURCH UNITY

Francis Bacon wrote.

'Men ought to take heed of rending God's church by two

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kinds of controversies. The one is, when the matter of the point controverted is too small and light, not worth the heat and strife about it, kindled only by contradiction. . . . The other is, when the matter of the point controverted is great but it is driven to an overgreat subtlety and obscurity, so that it becometh a thing rather ingenious than substantial . . . Men create oppositions which are not, and put them into new terms, so fixed as whereas the meaning ought to govern the term, the term in effect governeth the meaning. There be also two false peaces, or unities, the one when the peace is grounded upon an implicit ignorance, for all colours will agree in the dark: the other, when it is pieced up upon a direct admission of contraries in fundamental points, for truth and falsehood, in such things, are like iron and clay in the toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image; they may cleave, but they will not incorporate.¹

The Church is the society of those who have the need for redemption. Some only of these have perfected their redeemed life. So there is no Church without unchristian elements; one of the most tragic results of this is disunion within the Church. So re-union is often falsely sought for the sake of recovered strength. Here are shortly indicated some general truths about disunion and its healing, derived from what we have learnt about true solidarity.

When a community so essentially perfect as the Church is disunited, the forces of disunion are much more subtle than in the secular sphere. They all assume the mantle of high principle. Ecclesiastical rivalry can become the meat of pride in its most disguised form. 'Terms tend to govern meaning', as Bacon suggests. Theology, liturgy, jurisdiction easily become not the reason for differences, but exalted conveniences for insuring the recognition of one's 'delightful individuality'. A sense of feebleness in the face of its own religious task makes a Church fearful of not being sufficiently distinct from others. Many peculiarities of religious bodies and many ecclesiastical decisions seem explicable only by the care religious leaders take to show that 'they can be different'.

The converse of this is that where one communion is strong in face of its own task, it is ready to make for unity by sifting

¹ *Essays: Of Unity in Religion*

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the points of difference to those that are real, and by taking a respectful, generous, and fruitfully controversial attitude to the position of other communions. The reunion of the Church will come, not by first willing and praying for unity, but by the separated churches—and we begin with our own first—willing and praying for better religion. Unity comes from the parts being lost in the truth and the task which the truth imposes.

It is an illusion to think that we are weak because we are divided. We are divided because we are weak. Matters of order and jurisdiction loom large because we are weak in matters of faith, doctrine and liturgy. These are what the Church is for. The Church is the society founded on *faith* in the central dogmas of original sin and of Jesus Christ the Redeemer, who guarantees the possibility of that grace which man cannot acquire by himself. The Church is built on a fact which is the object of faith. The task of the Church is to offer this fact of redemption to a world perishing for the lack of it and for its ignorance of its need for it. Secondly, the Church gives intellectual expression to this fact of redemption in its dogmas. Unity comes very much nearer when religious communions discuss dogma than when they ignore it. You can get to a point when you see that unity is not impossible if you meet members of other communions on a dogmatic issue. Where dogmas don't matter there are merely collisions in a fog. If you are serious about the 'thing' Christianity, you will be making for unity without concern for unity. The way to the recovery of unity is to be *presentative* of the Faith, not *representative* of one's own church. Unity, as Bacon says, is false if built either upon 'implicit ignorance' or upon 'admission of contraries'.

In the history of the Church there have been two kinds of conflicts—conflicts in which the faithful dispute about dogmas, and conflicts in which religious bodies quarrel over each other's limits and jurisdiction. In the last few centuries churchmen have disputed less about dogma and more about jurisdiction and each other's hindrances to unity. In this miserable dispute Christianity has been weakened. Religious bodies have achieved a spurious solidarity in opposition to other ecclesiastical or even secular interests, while they have allowed a disintegrating toleration in matters of dogma. Good controversy

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about dogma tends to unite Christians, because man requires certainty. Let Christians recognize the tragic divisions of Christendom, but let them see that the divisions represent a real cleavage about dogma. When men quarrel about dogma they are at least at one in this, that they believe there is a truth to be struggled for. To hope for truth by means of unity is to erect a real barrier to the achievement of unity. To struggle to know the truth of Christianity in dogma and in life, on the part of even one communion, will certainly not bring unity, but it will strike the first firm path out of our unhappy morass. Unity is not an addition of parts but the seeking of the same thing, for, as Saint Thomas sublimely puts it: 'Peace (concord) is no other thing than the union of all desires. Thus to unite a man (and we may add a Church) is the property of God, because divine love alone is great enough to engage all men's desires, and divine love is no other thing than God. For God knows how to gather unto one all desires and affections, since God is love, and love is the bond of perfection.'

II

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION



It would do no good service to men who are looking at Christianity for the purpose of discovering whether they want faith, to list a number of civilized results that have accompanied the existence of the Christian Church in the world. For one thing, if they were disposed to admire Christianity because it had produced a civilized life of which they approved, they would be further from the possibility of faith than if they had left the whole matter alone. That would be to judge Christianity by some extraneous standard selected by the inquirer, whereas the Rubicon to be crossed for a man to become a believer is the boundary which separates this attitude from one where the inquiring subject is taken out of his own centrality and becomes the object of judgment—with all his works, civilization among them—by the Christian word.

And if this inquiring admirer were stout enough to test his judgement by argument with other students of civilization he would find that his hoped-for certainty was based on a disputable probability. One set of such students believe in a law of progress which would have brought about the civilized conditions he admires, whether Christianity had appeared or not, and they might have strong grounds for saying that Christianity had as much hindered as furthered the progress of civilization. The other set of students do not believe in a general law of progress, but look for definite historic forces to account for the state of man at this and other periods. Christianity is accounted as one of those forces, and it must take its share of responsibility for the downs as well as the ups in the career of civilization since Christianity appeared on the historic scene. Moreover, they would say that the inquirer's tastes had been formed by

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the historic Christian process and the correspondence he would find between his preferences and the results he admires is a foregone conclusion and cannot be the basis of an objective decision.

As civilization is by no means exclusively a Christian product and is the burden as well as the friend of man, it is better first to see what light Christianity has to throw upon the civilizing impulse of mankind wherever it is to be found, upon the frailty of civilizations and the tragic problems in which that frailty involves man

I. THE THEOLOGY OF CIVILIZATION

Civilization is not natural to man. He does not everywhere develop that particular impress of his creative powers upon the external pattern of life, which activity we can take as a provisional definition of civilization. Until very recent times civilizations, with their ups and downs, were confined to certain definite blocks of the human race, and many groups of mankind remained in a condition of tribal organization, of food gathering, and worshipped none but local deities. The birth of civilization seems to have been marked by a transcending of these limits, by general ideas of a life worth living beyond those necessary for tribal survival, by agriculture and its sequels in definite economic production, and by the worship of high gods.¹ Ethics, conquest of nature and some view of the nature of ultimate reality which correlates phenomena because it transcends them, are the three main components of civilization. The way they interact determines the form of particular civilizations.

The civilizing impulse in mankind is then a historic phenomenon which arises under certain conditions. It is one activity of the spirit of man. Spirit belongs to man by his peculiar nature, but it creates civilization only under certain historic conditions. Put theologically, man has spirit by creation, he begins to make civilization when his spirit is confronted by a particular kind of historic situation in the divine dispensation.

¹ See C. Dawson, *The Age of the Gods* (Sheed and Ward); W. J. Perry, *The Origins of Civilization* (Pelican)

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The civilizing impulse is contagious; civilizations have spread, they have not evolved.¹ Moreover, the advent of civilization is also the beginning of history.

History means that man has learnt to stand somewhat out of the mere succession of generations; he can then trace a connection in that succession and can make a pattern of living meant to endure and to which the succession of generations is meant to minister. Civilization is then one of the attempts of man to express on earth his superiority to mere natural process. History is the story of those attempts, the story of the impress of his spirit upon process. It has often been noted that the Bible begins with a garden and closes with a city. The Christian drama of human destiny therefore insists that the character of the *Civitas* is in some ultimate sense an integral part of man's essence and fulfilment.² Civilization derives from that element in man by which he stands beyond Nature and History. He makes civilization because though he is involved in them, he is not entirely a product of Nature and History. Civilization-making is that activity in which man seeks to fashion a home for himself, spirit and body, in the natural and historic context to which he belongs as a creature, a moulding of things and process to reflect as far as may be the needs of his spirit. It is an extension in space and time of man's participation in the transcendent absolute reality, an extension which has its first instatement in human language.³ Civilization is the man-made surrogate for the Kingdom of God.

This relation of civilization and the spirit of man has a double aspect, which makes civilization both the glory and the tragedy of man. In the first place, civilized living, being a form imposed by man upon the external organization and direction of his existence, releases energies for activities which are not directly practical; the technical and moral activities of civiliza-

¹ I do not embark on the question of a single or multiple origin of civilization.

² The *Civitas* must not be confused with the town of our industrial-commercialism, which is largely the negation of *Civitas*.

³ Cf. R. A. Wilson, *The Marvellous Birth of Language* (Guild Books): 'Language introduced the element of permanence into a vanishing world', p. 134.

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tion give rise to the cultural—the arts and the sciences. Moreover, when these activities form a tradition in thought and practice they provide individual men with resources beyond their personal contributions. Civilization has a certain life of its own on which men can count to carry them over the patches at which their own powers are not at their best. It serves as a home for man in his temporal pilgrimage. But this supporting of man by civilization only operates when it is flourishing—that is, when it embodies the creative powers of the epoch to which it belongs. When it decays, man is lost; he becomes a ‘hobo’ without a home; he feels dragged along with a culture that has lost its life, and he tries to compensate for this loss of vitality by greater external organization and makes frantic appeals to himself and his fellows for loyalty to a pattern of life which no longer appeals by its intrinsic excellence. This is one aspect of what Brunner calls the demonic character of civilization;¹ it lies in the double aspect of civilization by which it is at the same time the product of man’s spirit and the asphyxiator of that spirit.

Civilization thus comes under the general paradox of man’s existence which Christianity identifies in the doctrines of man as an image of God and of man as sinner, the creature who because he is a spiritual creature tends to deny his creaturehood.

Another aspect of this theological view of civilization lies in the extent to which civilization recovers for man a replica of community, of an order different from the full community of persons which belongs to the Creation and to the restored Creation which is the Kingdom of God. Civilization has an influence upon society which is a corrective of the dissociating force of sin. So we find social history marked by all kinds of associations for common purposes which so far carry men out of their egoism that an impersonal imitation of personal community is in some measure achieved. These cannot help being sectional loyalties grouped round material possessions and tasks, types of social organization, intellectual pursuits, creative interests and religious cults. The pull of common interests

¹ *The Divine Imperative*, p. 342. Cf. Berdyayev’s critical reflections upon the objectification of the spirit in *Spirit and Reality*.

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with no socializing motive is the spring of most of the associations known to the sociologist, but its vitality is commonly ignored by the practical politician and reformer. These persons perforce have their concern aroused when associations break down or get in each other's way, and their job of mending the wreckage gives them a too artificial sense of social reality. Their task appears to them mainly as the arduous one of making men work together. But unity has come time and again with relatively little binding machinery when common interests of science, culture and religion have been at stake. Society is recovered as a by-product of common tasks which have often no specific socializing impulse. The will that makes societies is not the will to be social but the will of the many to do the same thing.

On the other side, if common interests unite, divided interests disrupt and their disruption cuts much deeper than purely personal or group conflicts. Civilization, while it unites men in the common thing, provokes those tendencies which escape its socializing influence to more subtle and drastic measures. The impulse to embody the fiction that man fashions reality, finding itself counteracted by the corrective force of cultural association, seeks to invade these and use civilized structure for its own egotistic ends. As civilization becomes more developed, with more exacting associations and institutions, we have an undercurrent of increasing conflict, not between persons and groups directly, but between associations and interests. Conflict is the minor key of civilization and grows with it, for the socially disruptive forces in man discover the benefits of association in common enterprises. One secret of the frailty of civilization lies in the fact that in its unifying process the motives of conflict are more concealed than in direct men-to-men antagonisms.¹

Many students of civilization have noticed the dual character of the creature, man, who is both helped and destroyed by his civilization. Spengler finds it in man as both a dependant of Nature and a rebel against her. 'That is his grandeur and his doom'—his doom because in the end Nature vanquishes

¹ Cf. R. Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (Scribners).

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man and his 'technics'. Spengler enjoins a heroic stand towards this fate.¹

So along with Christianity he rejects the evolutionary monism of modern philistinism. But he is at variance with Christianity in that, for him, the duality in Man is of Nature herself. He therefore leads to a despair which would be the last word if it were not for the curious fact that men need philosophers such as he to persuade them that it is the only honourable attitude. And where does the honour come from if man is but a 'beast of prey'? His philosophy may account for man's fate, but it does not account for the fact that man does not accept that fate, which is the problem that has inspired Spengler's imposing efforts.

For the Christian thinker the duality lies in man as part of Nature and having Spirit which has a transcendent parentage. This does account for the freedom which creates technics and civilization, which refuses to accept that 'all the great cultures are defeats' and starts again, and in which alone man can speak and obey the call to take a heroic stand.²

According to Albert Schweitzer civilization consists in a concord between the inner and outer life.³ This comes about by correspondence between three factors: man's ethical impulse, his culture and technics, and a world view (*Weltanschauung*). Schweitzer's analysis is important for us to-day in that we seem to be wanting in power to make our ethics control our technics, and the reason is that we have an emaciated Christian ethic unsupported by the Christian affirmation about the nature of reality—what Schweitzer means by a world view. Schweitzer's model is the eighteenth century, where he finds the correspondence at its best, and he deplures the withering of its strong ethical and rational impulse. Schweitzer is right in attributing decline to the habit of assuming the existence of principles, of

¹ O. Spengler, *Man and Technics* and *The Decline of the West* (Allen and Unwin).

² Man's recurrent attempt to make civilization as a frame for his soul after every breakdown is portrayed in *The Tragedy of Man*, by Imre Madach, the Hungarian dramatist.

³ *The Philosophy of Civilization*, especially Part I, 'The Decay and Restoration of Civilization' (Black).

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progress, in the facts, of viewing the trend of history as advance in civilization. He is right in pointing out the danger of treating civilization as something natural, like a forest, something to be simply exploited and not tended. That is the decline of the ethical spirit.¹ But he is wrong in attributing the decline to mere romanticism or laziness. It was bound to happen because the rational and ethical forces are only powers and not the spiritual centre of man's being. The eighteenth century achieved too cheap a concord between its inner and outer life by leaving the most truculent problems outside its philosophy, those which come from the dark cosmic, emotional and power forces in man, and man's organic relation to the earth, his folk, and his work and his gods. Religion can foster the growth of the ethical and rational powers only when it takes hold, *through its other disciplines* and *not* through morals and reason, of these other facts of man's existence.

Schweitzer does not save the competence of his rational ethicisism by adding the need for a world-view which is mystical—a knowledge of life which intellect looks at from without, mysticism from within. For life is destructive as well as creative, according to its being illusorily self-sufficient or consciously dependent upon its sources, natural and spiritual. Again, he insists that the world-view must be optimistic, supplying confidence that the world process has a spiritual and real aim. Such an optimism must either posit a monistic universe in which there can be no real lapses, or it must stand up to the existence of positive destructiveness, which can be overcome by God's own act and kept at bay by man's faithful response to that act. For Christianity there can be no mere lapse from reason and ethics, leaving things irrational and unmoral. Things are either true to their God-given nature or perverted. Men do not merely renounce civilization, they destroy it.

Here are, then, two recent views of the enigmatic relation between man and civilization.² They point to the duality in

¹ This point has also been strongly made by Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (Allen and Unwin).

² The list could be extended—for example, Freud's *Civilization, War and Death* (Hogarth Press) and J. D. Unwin's *Sex and Culture* (Oxford University Press) and *Hoplusia* (Allen and Unwin).

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man of which Christianity has its own account. This self-extension and self-defeat of the human spirit in civilization is therefore one aspect of the problem of man himself. Is the Christian Faith, which claims to state the problem of man at its deepest and offer a way of dealing with it, the insurer or judge of civilization? Some answer to this question has been given by Dr Arnold Toynbee in his massive *Study of History*,¹ and his conclusions on this very point have been summarized by him in the booklet *Christianity and Civilization*.² He there rejects two theories which he once held, the first that Christianity is the destroyer of civilization—as was held by Julian the Apostate, Gibbon the historian, and Frazer the anthropologist, and, we might add, Karl Marx; the second that religion is the humble servant of civilization—bridging the gap and preserving hope between the breakdown of one culture and the rise of another. Toynbee now defends the view that civilization is the handmaid of religion— a rather drastic handmaid, for it serves by its downfalls ‘as stepping stones . . . to the revelation of always deeper insight’³

Whether the ups and downs of civilization certainly make for the deepening of religion, at least the possibility that they do so is in accord with the truth that civilization has in it both the godly and the demonic powers of man.

In brief, the Christian understanding of civilization may be summarized in a few statements. The impulse to make his life civilized belongs to man as created an incarnate spirit, though the impulse comes to life only in response to certain historical conditions the spread of which must be regarded by the Christian as part of God’s providential order. The civilizing impulse has an ambivalent power, just as the spirit of man is the source

¹ Oxford University Press.

² Burge Memorial Lecture (S C M Press).

³ ‘If religion is a chariot, it looks as if the wheels on which it mounts towards heaven may be the periodic downfall of civilizations on earth. It looks as if the movement of civilization may be cyclical and recurrent, while the movement of religion may be on a continuous upward line. The continuous upward movement of religion may be served and promoted by the cyclical movements of civilizations round the cycle of birth-death-birth’ (ibid, p 22).

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of good and evil; it carries man on when it is the creative expression of man's spirit, it drags him down when it becomes an end in itself, and this happens when man ignores his dependence upon his spiritual and natural sources.¹ Christianity is neither the friend nor foe of civilization. It accepts it as a fact of his existence and can offer man the resources to profit religiously by its achievements and failures. Christianity in history has prompted the growth of its own type of civilization. This has its own superb achievements and its own colossal problems. That achievement and those problems now claim attention.

II THE CHRISTIAN ACHIEVEMENT

The Christian religion first appeared in history as it burst through the chrysalis of the Hebrew theocratic society. This had been a kind of totalitarian unity of Church and society, common to the ancient world, and its character as such had been closely stifled by the compulsion to exist within the boundaries of a political and trans-national Roman State. Jesus the Christ had come and brought into being a body of men who knew that the inner secret of every man's life and its fulfilment was to be found in that man's relation to Him. He and His teaching defined the meaning of personal existence, above, and therefore if need be over against, definitions of human significance in terms of race, tribe, class, society, nation, state or civilization. That relation to Christ meant a personal revolution. The Christian form of salvation, or new birth, produced a new mode of consciousness. Christian man now knew himself and all other men as held in being and in truth by the eternal God who was also the God who comes into history as this particular Man, Jesus of Nazareth, with a name, a date, and an address on earth.

In Christianity appeared a unique living and affirmative experience of the archetypal human reality, after which men

¹ The two greatest Christian classics on the double aspect of man's relation to his history, of which civilization is a main part, are St. Augustine's *City of God*, cf. J. N. Figgis, *Political Aspects of St. Augustine's City of God* (Longmans), and G. Vico, *Scienza Nuova*, cf. B. Croce, *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico* (Latimer)

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had groped and which had been sought for at that crucial period in three notions of human significance. These notions are on the purely humanist plane incompatible and intellectually paradoxical: they are represented by Greek thought, Roman politics, and Jewish religious history. Firstly, Christianity gave a decisively new turn to the sense that man has his meaning in direct relation to a transcendent eternal Being, not *via* the place each man holds in some terrestrial larger whole. Whereas Greek thought and Oriental philosophy had always upheld this to the detriment of the real significance of particular communities, things and persons, Christianity fixed the significance in the co-existence of the particular and the transcendent, neither of which is to be explained away. Secondly, Christianity put into a new dimension the truth which was being practically demonstrated by the Roman Empire, linking various peoples together through a system of law, of military and administrative organization - the truth enshrined in the possibility of a law for all men, beyond the local norms of historically grown communities. The doctrine of the grace and love of God for every man therefore meets and clinches on the religious plane what mankind was struggling to achieve, with all its terrible dangers, by the political compulsions of the imperial idea. Thirdly, Christianity balanced on the fine point of the individual life the unique relationship to God as Creator, Lord, Saviour and Judge, which Israel had learned and exemplified as a tribal and national community.

The individual universalism of Christianity, based upon conviction of the link between the person and God who is beyond and above all the human groupings of mankind, put man in a new relation to the natural and historical distribution of human beings. Christianity spoke to men *in* those historic situations; it did not speak to them primarily *through* those situations of race, folk or class. There emerged then immediately a problem of the relation of the Church and each existing historic community in which the Church ministered. While Christianity provided a unifying force between groupings with entirely different roots, it did so by introducing a tension of another kind, the tension between historic communities and the Church as custodian of the universal, common elements in human exis-

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tence. That is why at one stage Christianity, having become a formative influence in society, welcomed and adopted the pagan ideas of a natural law that belongs to man as man—distinct from his status in a particular historic setting. So these two things, the supernatural mystery of the Church and the supernatural, rational law of justice, were two strata of the soil on which a new kind of unity was grown—a unity which overarched the bound set by geographical, cultural and occupational circumstances. On the other hand, just because of this religious, metaphysical and legal unity which Christianity sponsored, the Christian community in the world has been dogged all through its history by the stress and strain of having as its members people who, on the one hand, participate in the universal realm of grace and love and in a common justice, and, on the other, in the life of historic communities with their own group life.

Certain features have marked the civilization of Christendom, which follow from this fundamental orientation. But they follow, on the whole, in a peculiar way which is not generally understood. It is not so much that these particular civilized results follow the development of special faculties and habits as a result of ideals or advice. It is rather that the Christian outlook closed certain problems and thereby encouraged the release of human energies in other directions. There is a kind of inverse relation between the things a people or culture take for granted and the things they bother about. Only when some matters are settled have men the freedom and power to deal with other matters. Faculties which are dormant or repressed under certain circumstances are set free when the division of life into certainties and problems is changed. My treatment in what follows is based on the axiom that Christian culture, like every other, has its own division into certainties and problems. Its uniqueness, and, I would say, its finality, lies in its placing the certainties at the very centre and thereby making problematic the more external layers of human existence. In particular, I hold that the love impulse in man is more ultimate than the dissociative and egotistic one, though in human phenomena generally overridden by it. Christian faith dissolved certain kinds of egotistic fears and so released the arche-

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typal community forces of the Creation in man. If perfect (divine) love casteth out fear,¹ that casting out allows the inherent forces of love to operate. The story of Christendom, of course, shows only a relatively successful fulfilment of this process, but disgust with the lapses and violations of it prove the point.

Perhaps the most striking contribution Christianity has made to the pattern of human living comes from the reverence it inculcated for human life as such, not just the supernatural life, but the terrestrial, biological and soul-life of man. This is the ground of the philanthropic and clinical service which has played a conspicuous part in the Christian enterprise. Because each held his own life in time as not too serious, he was less alarmed at the potential threat which the existence of other lives always means; so he was free from the fear that tends to subdue others or neglect to succour them. This disposition also undermined the tendency to assess human living only for its social value; it therefore inculcated respect for the weak, the defenceless and the social nuisances. Where Christianity gave a meaning to human existence, which is not dependent upon success or survival of historic communities, there life as such becomes the object of reverence, and not merely the serviceable life. From this comes the opposition to infanticide, to the neglect or destruction of the feeble, and to taking of human life for sport.²

Closely connected with philanthropy and reverence for life is the humanitarianism which grew up on Christian soil, though this often took centuries to bear some of its most obvious fruits, such as, for example, the freeing of slaves. The humanitarian sentiment is the consequence of being able to look without wanting, of valuing others, not for what they mean to ourselves either blatantly or in a *quid pro quo* spirit, but solely for what they are in God. According to Christian

¹ 1 John iv 18

² Many of the concrete results of Christian civilization were described in the late Dr. Dearnley's essay which this one has replaced. The present writer acknowledges several useful suggestions derived from that essay. For a recent treatment of the same theme, see H. G. Wood, *Christianity and Civilization* (Cambridge), ch. 1

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theology this is what they are in their own true being—their true selves. Because he who looks outwards knows his own significance to lie in God's love holding him in being, he can look at his neighbour without expecting the neighbour to give him value and significance, he is therefore never fundamentally disappointed in his neighbour and he can begin to love him as himself. He can even, with deepened Christian sanctity, be willing to be hurt by his neighbour, knowing how to transmute it into good. He is then spared the need to defend himself from inward hurt by callousness or by outwardly hurting others.

The scientific spirit has grown more vigorously within the borders of Christendom than anywhere else, in spite of a number of striking clashes between the opinions of churchmen and particular discoveries at one or other period, which are both the surprise and excitement of the superficial. Dr. Dearmier attributed this to a certain sensitiveness and curiosity and a daring love of truth. On our analysis it was the certainty of Christian man that he dwelt in what was an ultimately friendly universe, all tragic appearances to the contrary, that gave him an inner poise free from anxiety about the centre of his being and which allowed his curiosity to be turned on to the external world. From this overcoming of inner uncertainty grew the spirit of inquiry and the scientific temper with regard to the world outside man. Moreover, the conviction that man brings something to his life in history which is not given by it—that the operative centre of his being is not involved in the fate of history—brought about a certain confidence in activity towards the outside world, freed from fears and hesitations at possible false steps.

Again, from the peculiar admixture of light-heartedness about temporal things, and solemnity about eternal ones and the possible loss of these, come the most characteristic features of the art of Christian Europe.¹

The social configuration of Christendom follows from the specifically Christian attitude to reality, particularly as concerns the relation of God and the world. In the first place, the doctrine of creation carried with it the sense of the significance of particular things and persons. Hence the value given to

¹ P. Dearmier, *The Necessity of Art*.

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individuals in their own right, as distinguished from all attitudes which regard them merely as functions of a larger territorial whole. This is the basis of what is positive in the idea of democracy, or what is perhaps better called the true liberal idea. It means that the parts of society, persons, natural and functional groups, have valid existence for their own ends. Man is regarded as the mediator between the Eternal Law and society, not society the mediator between the Eternal Law and man.¹ That is why modern totalitarianism is a counter-revolution which tends to undo the Christian contribution to civilization.

In the second place, we have the large part taken in European history by the notion of a general law for all men which expresses the essential structure of his being. This notion has a pre-Christian origin, but, like the dogma of the significance of particulars, it was given a new setting in the Christian scheme. Belief in a law above the regulations of particular communities was linked to the universal elements in Christianity and gave men a court of appeal about human rights over against the positive law of any historic executive unit. This universal conception of law and the practice based upon it had to operate along with the historic growths of individual communities, nations and groups, and the tension between the two is part of the history of European society. It meant that the self-preservative, 'prerogative' law of any temporal society was not supreme, and men could appeal from it to a general 'normative' common law. This common law provided a shelter in which grew up in Europe associations of learning, of crafts, states and nations, each with a vitality of its own.

The interaction of the three unfused elements in European civilization has been the condition of that freedom which modern men prize and which they take far too much as if it were in the nature of things. The three elements are equality of man in the realm of grace, a common universal law, and the historic folk-life of each community. The first was brought by Christianity, the second was adopted by it, and the third was given in history itself for the first two to work upon.

¹ The present writer has developed this point in *The Religious Prospect* (Muller)

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WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

Our present situation can best be described as post-Christian, because it has retained in the democracies a real devotion to some of the ethical and social results of the Christian outlook. But our world has largely lost the doctrine and feeling upon which these results have been reared. It is not merely the way of thinking about reality given by Christianity that has gone, of equal importance is the loss of emotional support for mental outlook which in the formative period of Christendom was provided by the rituals of daily life and worship. The radical dogmas of modern thought are derived from a pseudo-objectivity which in theory puts man into the objective world and regards him supposedly as an insignificant particle of a vast physical universe or an incidental item in a biological process. But the illusion of objectivity is obtained because the whole outlook in fact places man and his inquiring activity at the centre of the world of knowledge.

From the foregoing sections of this essay it can be seen that this feature of the modern outlook may be described as a perversion of tendencies actually brought about by Christianity. The priority of man over his environment, physical, biological, and social, which Christianity proclaimed as integral to man's dependence upon the transcendent God, slipped over into an independence of his creaturely setting when the religious foundation was cut away. So the human situation to-day is the consequence of two schisms. one, between man and his natural organic relations with the earth, his family, region and historic community, the other and deeper, the schism in man's consciousness between the human spirit and the divine. The consequence is the spread of a cosmopolitan civilization of technical means, with a momentum of its own and without human control by moral or metaphysical or religious doctrine of ends and purposes. This kind of civilization gives man the rituals which canalize his emotions: the routines of industrial and commercial employment, the standardized picture of life given in the film, the spread of knowledge of this pseudo-culture by the printed gossip known as the press, the common pattern of

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thought-habits, induced by the radio. All this prevents man's questioning of the soundness of civilization, and encourages the deceptive confidence that by ability without culture any human disaster can be averted. The most ominous sign is the fact, clear to the discerning, that all proposed remedies are extensions of the collapse of a culture. Most of the 'planning' measures proposed for economic and international stability are in effect attempts to eliminate contradiction of purposes within a certain area of life, by extending the area in which they operate. To complete by deliberate political measures the abolition of nations, which had already been started by the growth of irresponsible industrial and commercial expansion, is supposed by many to be a step towards recovery. But 'Nation has to do with the birth and growth of peoples, not with the structures they build. A nation is nearer than any civilization can be to the enduring realities of the Creation'.¹ Perhaps the last stage in purveying escapes which are in reality further signs of catastrophe has been reached in the hopes placed on education of the young.² Karl Jaspers, the German philosopher, saw through this illusion of laying the future on youth, before it overwhelmed his own country. He wrote: 'When education grows out of the spirit of a substantial whole, youth is immaturity. Youth reveres, obeys, and has as youth no validity; for youth is preparation. But when the whole is dissolved . . . in times of cultural disintegration . . . youth acquires a value in itself. It is as though youth is expected to create what the teachers have already lost.'³ Or, as T. S. Eliot has said, education cannot create a culture; it can only grow out of one.

While these evidences of cultural decline have been operating in the democracies, the totalitarian revolutions, which in some ways were attempts to arrest it, have, in fact, only increased its *tempo*. They have done so by trying to heal the split between the dogmas and the ethics of modern European civil-

¹ Philip Mairet, essay on 'The Nation Behind the War' in *The Church Looks Ahead* (Faber).

² See Reinhold Niebuhr, *Beyond Tragedy* (Nisbet), essay on 'The Ultimate Trust'.

³ *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* (Sammlung Göschen).

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ization which has tried to live by Christian ethics and non-Christian dogmas of existence. The new social paganisms sought to recover unity by abolishing the ethics and by making human conduct merely an instrument of policy, mainly policy for political domination through industrial supremacy under control of the ruling caste. Nazi Germany represents the extreme case. There we have an attempt to revive a tribal organization, harnessing the mechanized power of a hypertrophied industrialism, at the expense of the vegetative and natural community life of her own and her subjugated peoples. But this is merely the last act, using force, of a process that industrial civilization has engaged in elsewhere by money and trade: building up mechanized economic monopoly at the cost of impoverishing the natural foundations of community living, the soil, the family, diffused property, the region, and spontaneous associations in craft, recreation and culture.¹

This war is both a judgment and a pointer towards a new birth of civilization. To quote Mr. Mairet again:

'Had this war not happened, our civilization would, by all the evidence, have gone on building ever bigger factories, engines, and ships, higher buildings housing bigger businesses in greater cities, and employing vast masses of the populations, monotonously tending machinery to make greater quantities of things for sale abroad. Apparently it would have gone on doing this until it wilted like a plant that has outgrown its roots—until the exploited and impoverished soil gave out beneath it. That indeed is happening, for the soil is being washed down the rivers, or blown away on winds, from ever-widening areas of the earth, and this, as General Smuts has said, is a greater menace to us than any political problem. . . . A return to our neglected roots in Nature would naturally follow a return to our spiritual sources, and be of the brightest augury for peace. We might then think less of saving civilization (a great part of which is doomed beyond reprieve), but we might become capable of something far more urgent and desirable—that is, of recreating culture.'²

¹ For a strong statement of the imperative need to recover nurturing relations to the earth, see K. E. Barlow, *Discipline of Peace* (Faber).

² *Op cit*, p. 64

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Sooner or later a new civilization will be born from the seed of a rediscovered culture, because it is in the nature of man to try again. But the human suffering involved in the period of transition can be lessened in proportion as men are aware of the forces of decay and renewal. The two main conclusions which should inform such an awareness have already been indicated. Those who hold on to the ethical aims of Christianity must struggle to underpin them with the full Christian belief in the nature and destiny of man, the incarnate spirit who is always liable to rebel against the real structure of his being unless he puts his spirit at the disposal of the Holy Spirit of God. Again, man to-day must submit his cleverness to the discipline imposed by the fact that he is part of Nature. He can live at all only by observing his biological dependence upon it; his societies can be sound only if they grow upon regional health and wholeness; his mind and soul can remain balanced only when his techniques do not obscure his touch with natural forces and the rest of God's creation. Political groupings, such as the nation, can be good neighbours to one another only when each has its own health and strength; otherwise it will regard the others as means for solving its own problems and become aggressive when the others do not submit to be so used.

Civilization is not the Kingdom of God. Full Christian community is entirely a personal one in God. Nevertheless, civilization is the product of the human spirit, and European civilization of the direction given to the spirit of man by the Christian faith. Perhaps, only because man is not in the Kingdom of God has he to make civilization, but the effort is made because the pull of his *Patria* in the Eternal World impels him to make a frame of life which upholds him when he is *in via* on earth.

III

RELIGION AND THE STATE

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The State has always presented something of a problem to the Christian Church. It has also in a way been a problem to man himself, who has created it for his own needs. If both the Church and man himself have been bothered as well as assisted in the same way by the State, that would be proof that the Church really holds the secret of human life. It would also be strong evidence that man cannot live on truly human terms with the State unless both his life and that of the State have their foundation in religion. But a religion 'dragged in' to help men to solve problems they cannot solve without it will fail because it is not true religion. God cannot be exploited, only worshipped. That is the thesis of this contribution to the 'Recall to Religion'

I A CHRISTIAN PROBLEM

The Church-and-State problem is almost peculiar to Christian history. It does not exist when either the State is the creature of the Church or when the Church is merely a department of the State. The problem grows in seriousness with the history of the Christian Church and with the development of civilization. As Dean Hanson has reminded us, the tension between spiritual and temporal factors in life is no mark of the immaturity of our civilization, but of its advanced stage. 'In a deep and abiding sense this tension and recurrent conflict between the temporal and the spiritual is Western Civilization. It is Christianity *in via*.'¹

The problem did not exist in the Hebrew Church-State

¹ Foreword by the Dean of King's College, London, to *Church and State*, by Professor H. M. Ralston, pp. 7, 8

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where the constitution was a totalitarian theocracy. It was theocratic because the kings were the Lord's anointed and, though not priests, exercised a sacred office in legislation and control over divine worship.¹ While they were often rebuked by the prophets, it was for their unfaithfulness to this vocation, not because they usurped a spiritual right. In the second place, the Church-State was totalitarian because the prophets, priests and kings were all aware that the Word of God was given not only for spiritual matters, as we understand them, but for all aspects of life, from foreign policy to honesty in weights and measures. No human activity was excluded from the divine writ. In fact, the distinction between secular and spiritual had no meaning. There was only the distinction between the godly and idolatrous. In this condition Church and State were one thing, though its leaders had various offices.

In a different way the Church-and-State problem does not exist where religion is a subsidiary function of the State, either defined by State enactment or tolerated only when practised as a worshipping cult. Such was largely the case in the civilizations of antiquity, and attempts to revive that condition of affairs to-day constitute, perhaps, the most serious crisis for the Christian Church since the days of Imperial Rome.

By the very nature of the Christian Religion neither of these conditions is possible in a State where the Christian Religion exists. The universal character of the Christian Church denies it the power to exercise totalitarian claims in the political sphere directly. A theocratic Church, extending over more than one State, must leave policy and administration of civil matters to the political agents of each State. To preserve its theocratic character it must confine its totalitarian claim to its own sphere. Nor can the Christian Church allow the theocratic life of a people to be defined by the State in each place because, in fact, the State, in itself unregenerated by grace, always tends to claim the whole life of man for political ends. Man is more than a citizen, and such a claim violates the essential nature of man as a spiritual being with roots in the eternal world.

¹ Cf C. Lattey, S. J., 'The New Testament and the Pagan Emperors' in *Church and State* Report of Cambridge School of Catholic Studies, 1935.

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The problem of Church and State arises, then, immediately, with the supernational and the supernatural character of the Christian Church. And it does so because of the Church's doctrine of the nature and destiny of man. Man is the common factor in both Church and State. Though the hand of God is in both, it is on account of man, with his specific nature and needs, that Church and State have their actual characters on earth. Man is the enigma who develops the State for his own human needs and often finds it a burden and a reproach; man is also the enigma who finds his home in the Church where his life, both intimate and social, is linked with the eternal, and also finds it necessary to have a separate political life which recurrently presents him with a problem of religion and the State. Because this problem lies in man himself he can never settle it once for all, it has to be met and dealt with afresh in each age and generation.

II. TRUE AND FALSE REVIVALS

The Recall to Religion, in which this essay takes its part, comes at a time when the political problems of men are, by the march of events, being laid bare in their fundamental nature as problems touching closely the religious life of Christendom. We have therefore to see the religious significance of the present historical situation.

But first of all it is necessary to distinguish between two movements, both making for a recovery of a religious outlook. One is the authentic voice of the Christian Church calling men to faith, repentance, worship and consecration. It is a call to responsible surrender to the Living God. It is to that secret of the fulfilment of human life, given in Jesus Christ and His Church, that the 'Recall to Religion' is made. And it is made in the name of the Christian truth itself. No one familiar with the story of the Christian Church can fail to know that at each fresh wave of true godliness, when the faithful have been stirred to deeper spiritual vitality, there has been a profound and real transformation of the temporal order itself. The struggles of the early Church, the work of Augustine, the rise of the religious orders, the ferment of Christian philosophy in the thirteenth

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century, the Reformation controversies, the Counter-Reformation, the Oxford Movement and the Wesleyan Revival in England—all these are landmarks in the history of movements of spiritual origin which have led to new problems and orientations in relation to the external and political factors in the world, though these were seldom designed and not often foreseen by their originators. It is not, therefore, to be expected that a convincing return to the practice of religion will leave untouched men's attitude and relation to the State. If no real problem arises in this sphere it will be a sign that the revival is not truly religious, but a retreat into a subjective cult which is completely foreign to those epochs in the life of the Christian Church when it has really made history. So we must expect that a truly religious revival, if it is to be more than a repetition of much of the eviscerated pietism of the modern era, will compel us to a renewed handling of the problem of religion and the State.

But just because true religion does affect men's outlook upon temporal problems, many are, and will be, turning to it because of these results, and not for itself. There is, in fact, a widespread canvassing of Christian thought to-day by Church members and outsiders for social and political reasons. From the *débris* of an agnostic or rationalist age, thinkers, writers, artists and sociologists are crawling out to sniff the air and see whether after all the traditional doctrines of the Faith may not prove a surer and more acceptable philosophy than the older secular faiths that failed them or the newer secular dogmas that terrify them.

Christianity is offered and accepted as the 'way out' of distasteful dilemmas such as that between Communism and Fascism. There is much counting of religion for purely cultural and political reasons. And within the Churches themselves we hear voices blessing the old faith for its social value and use. Free-churchmen find religious circles the one place where the favourite clichés of political liberalism retain a savour of reality, and feel safety in a world rapidly throwing up totalitarian states; genuine Catholics espouse the cause of the 'right' in politics as a bulwark against atheistic Communism, and many less genuine persons will give their support to religion

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if it appears to them to uphold law and order in an age of anarchy. The Church of England has many upholders who see in its continued State connection a model of what the relation of religion and the national life should be. All these tendencies to 'value' religion for its social results are useful in support of a recall, but they are not in themselves religious forces, and if they are mistaken for a genuine religious impulse they may easily result in a revival of 'religion' without a return to God. This is a real danger. An authentic wave of Christian worship and life will meet these tendencies on its way and will, by dis-infecting them from their all-too-human centredness, derive strength and support from them. But it will not arise for any of these reasons

III. THE SITUATION TO-DAY

The influence of religion upon the State and of the State upon religion is being presented before our eyes as something that involves the position of the human being in his political relationships. It is not merely a question of the Church confronting the State, demanding liberty from it or enjoying its protection or even moulding its character. The Church has a stake in the nature of the State because it has responsibility as guardian of the ultimate truth about human life. And to-day it is largely in the sphere of politics that the Christian doctrine about man is called in question or smothered out of the way.

The history of the modern world is largely the history of political states, at any rate in the minds of most who have received a modern education. And the contemporary history of modern States raises poignantly in the minds of men the question whether history has any meaning at all. Already, when modern man, confident in his powers to produce a steadily evolving civilization on a basis of prosperity, peace and democracy, found that the deliberately held hopes of an age were being defeated by forces they had not taken into account, the question had begun to arise. What if this era of liberal industrialism with all its promise is, after all, but one more turn of the senseless cycle of history? On top of this doubt comes revolution after revolution in the political thought and life of nation

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after nation. Can the finger of God be discerned in all this, can man work for any future state of society at all, and if not, how can the doctrine of Divine Providence be taught and believed with any conviction? So if this foundation truth of God's Providence in the world is to be retained or rediscovered there must be a Christian interpretation of the history of States as it is actually taking place. A religious theory of history as we want it to be, everything against it being merely accounted as the devil's work, will not do.

But in more definite ways contemporary political history is setting before us a religious problem. The rise of totalitarian states and the condition of those which remain relatively democratic and liberal are raising profound questions for the Christian mind and conscience. The totalitarian State is one in which the total life of man is claimed by the State for political ends. The consolidation of the State is the supreme good. Everything else, religion, science, art, education, the family, is required to minister to the supreme value of the State's existence. Man is regarded as existing for a political end; in that he finds his deepest significance and destiny. In practice man becomes a function of the State, though in theory totalitarian philosophies make the State the instrument of some more elemental reality. The Communist State is the weapon of the proletarian class in whose victory history finds its fulfilment. The Fascist state is the executive of the national life in its natural, cultural and economic activities. In the German State of National Socialism the State is the business end of the moving spirit of the *Folk Mund*. With its insistence on race, blood and soil, Nazi thought bases itself upon the biological elements in social living.¹

These, and other totalitarian experiments, are in their logical development in conflict with the Christian truth about human life. For the Christian man is a child of God, and therefore the father and not the child of the State. There is that in his inmost being that derives its meaning from his relation to God, who is behind all human and temporal purposes. While man has valid political aims under God, he can never regard his total

¹ These considerations and their consequences for the Church have been developed by the present writer in *Christian Polity* (Faber).

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life or his final loyalty as given unconditionally to the political authority. And, further, because of 'the primacy of the spiritual' in the very being of man, the natural activities of his social life, intellectual, artistic, political, economic and personal, have their proper functions determined by the inclusive spiritual nature of man. To erect the political or any other human purpose into the supreme place of the spiritual is idolatry, and it is false to the true nature of the human being. Man is more than a citizen of an earthly state, for he is a pilgrim of eternity. Therefore to include all his life as summed up in his citizenship is to do violence to man's true nature. 'Although *formally considered as part of the State*, every act of his can be referred to the common good of the State, man, *considered in the absolutely peculiar and incommunicable quality of his liberty and as ordered directly to God as to his eternal end*, himself enjoying therefore the dignity of a whole (to a more eminent degree than the entire physical universe, because God is much more intimately the end of a soul than of the whole universe of bodies), under this formal aspect escapes inclusion in the political ordination'¹

The existence of Churches is a real problem to Totalitarian States, for in fact they challenge the omniscient authority of the civil power. The latter will allow religion on its own terms; the Church must be destroyed, cajoled or tamed to make it a convenient political influence. Lenin was logically in the right in seeing that if political ends were to be supreme religion must be wiped out. Concordats between the Roman Catholic Church and Fascist States have provided strained and uneasy settlements, while State protection for religion in Germany is offered with such demands for restriction of the religious activity of the Churches that a deep conflict has arisen between State and Church. Too often, however, Churches are aroused by this challenge of totalitarian politics merely in the name of their own liberty of worship and life. Religious leaders are missing a great opportunity by not insisting that this claim to an autonomous life for the Church is made not for its own sake, but in the name of man for whose true nature the Church is surety.

If this responsibility were realized by Christian men, there

¹ J. Maritain, *The Things that are not Caesar's* (Sheed & Ward), p. 4

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would not be the smug satisfaction in the countries where the totalitarian claim has not been so overtly made. There is a serious problem of religion and the State even where there is no open conflict, and where there is no semi-religious 'myth' of the 'divine' class or nation or race. In Anglo-Saxon countries where liberal ideas still hold some sway, we have a situation in some ways the converse of that in the totalitarian States. Totalitarian politics are marked by a real political vitality; there is an enthusiasm that works for a positive social end. However restrictive we may conceive that end to be, and however men may be artificially suppressing some genuine impulses in its service, the totalitarian State to-day is engendering a conviction that men may work for the future. And this conviction that man will find himself in wholehearted loyalty to the State is supported by a faith that in that service men are working in line with the universal march of history. The class, the nation, the race are each of them the bearer of historic destiny. Here is a secular religious replica of the Christian faith in Divine Providence. It does with a measure of success unite the inner and outer life of man, healing, superficially at any rate, a conflict between them which had been growing more acute in the world of liberal democracy.

In the democratic States there is little or no political enthusiasm. No one feels that the State is the full embodiment of the people's political consciousness. Leaders may still say 'Well, *we* are the State'; but the life has gone out of the phrase. Men feel that the State is not something they have willed, but something they are putting up with. They are restive under its encroachments but justify them for reasons of necessity. For the average Englishman the State is a big organization that does something *to* him. Of what it does *for* him he is dimly aware, and he is ready in its defence on the grounds that the only alternative to increased State-mindedness is chaos and disintegration. Has not Mr. Baldwin used words that produced not the flicker of a liberal eyelid? 'In a Democracy we must expect the Government to interfere more and more in the lives of the people?' This tendency is accepted and justified because of an uneasy suspicion that, in the present world, society minus omniscient state equals chaos. The result is an inner con-

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flict. While in the external life of society there is called for a growth of control, regulation, planning, and restriction to prevent disintegration, on the spiritual level there is uttered a cry for liberation and spontaneity which it seems impossible to answer without social danger. There can be little hope of a fruitful alliance between religion and the State, if men's loyalty to the latter is not much more than 'holding on to nurse for fear of something worse'. In such a case men will use religion as a refuge, a mood in which to retreat away from a political atmosphere they feel to be not quite worthy of religious seriousness or probity, but in which they have to act nevertheless. Or religion will be used to back up an induced political attitude that carries no real appeal in itself. If both these results are avoided there is danger of continuing what has marked much recent history, namely, a conventional truce between religion and politics which is possible because there is no great enthusiasm for either.

IV. CHURCH AND STATE IN THE PAST

The relation of man to God and of man to the State are not therefore brought together to-day in any satisfactory way. Totalitarianism produces a certain political vitality and raises acute problems for the Church; the more liberal regimes have not this acute problem, but are in danger of evading it by inanition and a spurious separation of the religious and political spheres. Shall we have to choose between the State swallowing religion or annihilating it, with an open or suppressed conflict, on the one hand, or a demarcation of religion and politics so outright that conflict is avoided because they never touch, on the other? There are voices which virtually claim that this latter is the situation to be encouraged. That religion should be a purely private cult of personal piety is a view in which such opposing personalities as Mr. Stalin and Lord Hugh Cecil are at one.

There is strong reason to be found in Christian history for declining to evade the problem in either of these ways. There are two authorities, the spiritual and the political, both of God, and neither may regard itself as the source of the other. There

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is no danger to-day of the ecclesiastical power claiming to be the fountain-head of all law after the manner of Boniface VIII, or even Gregory VII. The task before us is to find the way to stimulating a fruitful alliance of Church and State which will avoid the opposite dangers of a merely political religion and a personal cult that has no public influence except to induce acquiescence in the civil sphere. Christian history tells us that this task cannot be avoided, though the form of the problem has changed from one period to another.

In the period of the early Church when Christians were a minority body within the Empire with its totalitarian claims and demands for worship of the Emperor, the problem was for the faithful one of moral decision. A heroic choice had to be made when the Empire made a claim upon the Christian citizen that he was bound to regard as idolatrous. No State or emperor could be put in the place of the Living God. The refusal meant persecution and death. But even those who, like Saint Paul, had no reason to love the State for its behaviour and false demands, never doubted that civil government had divine sanction.

From the time when Christianity became officially recognized and sponsored by Constantine the problem changed. It became one, not so much of moral decision, but rather of delineating the boundaries of the two spheres, religious and political. It was mainly a question of harmonizing two allegiances within the human mind. As bishops in time became partly temporal rulers and kings churchmen with a sacred office, the Church was faced for many centuries with the problem of how to keep clear the distinction between the spiritual and secular authorities and at the same time to ensure that all human activities should be subjected to the lordship of Christ. When in the fifth century the Pope appealed to the Emperor Anastasius to help him in subduing certain rebellious bishops, controversies naturally arose about how the distinction between Church and State could be maintained while the civil authority was used as a Christian power. Pope Gelasius did not settle it, but rather opened it up for future ages to wrestle with, when he enunciated his famous formula there are two powers which rule the world with princely authority, the royal

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and sacerdotal; each is supreme in its own sphere. But who is to define the boundary of these spheres? Struggles in Europe to-day show that this is an ever-present question. In Germany State and Church have strongly differing views about it.

But from the eighth century, when the Pope crowned Charlemagne in St. Peter's, we find that the Church, to maintain independence and to emancipate the spiritual power from lay control, tended to claim supreme power over civil as well as spiritual affairs. Hildebrand, afterwards Pope Gregory VII, could say to the Church: 'If you are able to bind or loose in Heaven, you are able on earth to take away or to give to each according to his merits, empires, kingdoms, duchies, marquisates, counties and the possessions of all men.' Not even the philosophic revindication of the doctrine of the two powers by the authority of Saint Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century could bring about a solution. Already in his theory of the two *societates perfectæ*, one of which is the autonomous State, there were the germs of a break-up of the unitary theory of one society with two arms respectively administering the spiritual and temporal affairs of this one society. In Dante's *de Monarchia* we have a further step in justification of the State as deriving its authority direct from God, and the extravagant claims of Pope Boniface VIII that all law reposed in his own breast were rudely shattered by his captivity in the hands of the French monarchy. The national State was on the scene. The Reformation gave theological sanction for this snapping of the tension between religion and the State. Luther by making religion so interior an act of faith that the civil ruler was given *carte blanche*; Calvinism by attempting to make the world Christian and succeeding only in making Christianity worldly. And for Catholicism in the modern world the Church could expect no more than an 'indirect power' over the secular life of society, that is, no longer a direct authority in civil affairs but only such influence as it can exert upon men's lives and thoughts.

This might have resulted in a settlement of the problem if society had remained Christian in its deepest convictions. The Church might have been happy to be 'rescued from the turmoil of politics, and from the crudity of enforcing positive

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laws'. But in fact the 'indirect power' of the Church has become less and less of a reality. It has led to the modern evasion that it is the Church's business to announce general principles and to what has been called 'an overmastering Nation-State using and protecting a quiescent religion'.¹

V. THE SECULARIZATION OF SOCIETY

The separation of the spiritual and secular spheres which is a mark of the modern world has led to serious problems for the Church, because along with it has proceeded a steady secularization of society itself. We have no longer to deal with the same men in two different aspects of their existence, but increasingly with three sets of people altogether who only overlap on their edges. There are not merely Church and State confronting one another in pre-occupation with their respective limits and seeking to influence the minds of the same men. There are three elements in the problem: Church, State and people. The Church is not the people, but a minority body in an increasingly secularized environment.² The people are not the State but a population bewildered as to its way of life, accepting the State and its encroachments as the only bulwark against disintegration. The problem before the Church is whether it can make a successful bid for the soul of modern civilization which is also being claimed by the secularizing influence of the modern State.

The secularization of life began when the supernatural claim of God upon men ceased to have a paramount influence. When thought turned inwards, not as with Bernard, Augustine, and Pascal, to know the soul as a boundary between the temporal and eternal, but to see the human being as complete in himself, man was put in the centre of the modern vision. Where modern humanism had a religious complexion God was conceived as the immanent spirit backing up human endeavour. Religion became, in the minds of its friends, a power-house for invigor-

¹ David Matthew, O.P., in *Church and State* (Sheed & Ward)

² The meaning and effects of secularization in the modern world and its political thought have been completely dealt with in the works of Mr. Christopher Dawson, especially *Religion and the Modern State*.

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ating the world's own efforts. The Christian tension between the supernatural and the natural was lost to the mass of men; sin, grace, repentance, the Kingdom of God reaching out from the Eternal Heavens and transforming the world by its very distinctiveness, became meaningless phrases. Man was the master of things and could make his own way; the Kingdom of God became another name for the end of the way. This phase of confident humanism might be epitomized, by a perversion of a famous *credo*, as 'There is no god but man and Allah is his prophet'

But just because man is not complete in himself, human life could not find satisfactory meaning in individualist humanism. One by one his secular activities were tried as the key to his existence. Reason, science, art, each have had their modern cult. In practice, however, to seek the purpose of life in one of its fragments led to no confidence in mastering human destiny. With no overarching conception of life as a whole, which alone a supernatural interpretation can give, the secular life of man became something not to be fitted into an eternal purpose, but took the place of that purpose itself. One by one the several departments of life, claiming first autonomy, tried to assume directive power over life as a whole. So we have had a succession of ghosts walking across the modern stage; the rational animal, the creator of beauty, the paragon of the biological process, the economic man and the political atom. Agnosticism as to the meaning of life gave place to one or other of these secular 'myths'. The present phase represents, in much literature and thought, a reaction against the arid rationalism of the past two centuries, and is seeking interpretations in the biological sphere, in sex, in race, in the unconscious collectivity, and so on.

Behind these consciously held secular interpretations the character of modern society has been chiefly moulded by the vast economic and technical changes of the past two centuries. Having been taught by the thinkers and writers the immensity of his powers, modern man in the mass found himself more and more a cog in a vast machine. Having been promised his freedom by release from the relics of feudal status, he discovered that this freedom meant in practice freedom to enter an eco-

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nomic contract he was not in a position to refuse. The commercial era turned human relations over a wider area into those of buying and selling and bargaining. Whatever privileges man had were to be paid for in money, or work, or discomfort. One by one the disappearance of the old certainties was followed by the disappearance of conviction that in some things man was at home in the universe. Industrial development tended to treat the human being as a 'hand', and in its present phase it would have him behave primarily as a sink in which to pour the products of technical efficiency in manufacture and agriculture. In either case it is assumed that man exists for an economic purpose.

Secularism means the erection of a subsidiary secular goal into the place of the supreme purpose of human existence, and because it violates the true nature of man each phase of it gives rise to reaction. We are no longer in a state of arrogant and ruthless industrialism riding successfully over the souls and bodies of men. This very industrial civilization is shaken by contradictory aims within itself. Hence the cry for planning and control on a national and even a world scale. But the conflicts spring from an inversion of the true order of human activities. This is bound to happen in a secularized world. The natural life of man, cut away from direction by supernatural truth and power, does not remain natural, it becomes disordered. So in the tacit assumptions of recent social history life has been largely interpreted in terms of economic production, consumption as a means to keep industry going, and both production and consumption as processes for enabling money to be lent profitably. The most instrumental things have become the directors of social policy. In practice, democracies have come to be the convenient menials of plutocracy. And the sovereign government, whose aim in a natural social order would be that of defining the policy of society as a whole, gives itself more and more to the administrative rescue of the collapsing organized activities of men. Not only industry but education, and now the last stronghold of personal relationship, the family, are in danger of becoming material for the State's ambulance purposes.

In the relatively liberal and democratic countries this ten-

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dency is half-hearted, a regrettable necessity. In the totalitarian States it has become a conscious and overmastering faith. And this faith meets to some extent the hungers left unsatisfied in the period of liberal democracy. In place of scepticism and exploited loneliness it offers a dogma to live for and a conscious, social, organic purpose. Man requires certainty and solidarity, and, in whatever spurious ways, men find in Communism, in Fascism and in National Socialism a new response to their vital needs. They will prove to be dupes in that they have merely moved secularism on to more inclusive planes. But in contrast to the frustrated contract relationships of the commercialist and industrial era, they offer in theory at least a status in society and in the universe. They are efforts to impose a common aim which liberal democracy has been powerless to induce. This is no criticism of the idea of democracy itself, but it is of the basis upon which it has in fact been reared. The toleration which was one of its vaunted privileges had been largely a renunciation of any final truth about human life.¹ And totalitarian secularism, whether of class, nation, or race, is an inevitable heave of the modern soul in an attempt to recover from the agnostic and sceptical secularism of the liberal era.

VI. RELIGION AND SOCIETY

The problem of the relation of religion and the State in our own country is mainly this: how to recover what is the essential truth in the liberal idea and at the same time to meet the need for solidarity, a sense of community and a conviction that it is worth working for the future. It is to find a way through the dilemma of either some totalitarian idolatry or a barren truce based upon religious and political inanition. This is on the surface a political problem, but fundamentally it is religious. Not only because in fact totalitarianism, in order to become part of the consciousness of a people, has either to destroy religion, or to make it politically accommodating or

¹ The perversion of 'Toleration' in modern society has been cogently dealt with by M. B. Reckitt in the chapter 'Religion and Politics' of *Faith that Illuminates*, edited by the present writer (Centenary Press.)

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to develop a chthonic paganism. It is a religious problem because, in truth, the failure of liberal regimes has been due to religious weakness. There is a truth in liberalism which is so much a part of European civilization that it cannot be destroyed without banishing the secret of Christendom for good from human history. The truth of the liberal idea is that man cannot be confined to his political relationships. He is more than a brick in the social edifice. 'The Christian Revolution' in the ancient world was an affirmation of this truth based upon the positive doctrine of man as a creature of God, with his life reaching out to an eternal world and thereby affecting his life in this. The truth came straight out of the Biblical tradition of man as a dependent yet responsible creature of God, dependent not only through the conditions of his temporal life, but dependent in a direct relationship to God in the spiritual society of the Church, and this gave him a relative independence of the pattern into which the secular order was always anxious to squeeze him. The New Testament doctrines of sonship, sin, grace, redemption and the Church were the ultimate foundations of this truth about man.

Modern liberal thought tried to preserve the truth without its foundations. It affirmed the dignity of the human person, not in the name of something larger than his social relationships would warrant, but of something smaller. It claimed liberty for the individual man, not on the ground that man is a creature with one part of his being in the eternal world, but on the ground that as a political atom he has a right to exist in himself. His relative independence of merely political purposes, which was proclaimed by Christianity as springing from man's dependence upon God, was asserted by liberal thought as merely abstract and negative independence of State demands. Instead of claiming liberties *for* the pursuit of positive social purposes directed by man's spiritual relationships, it encouraged demands for liberty *from* this or that encroachment.¹

In Christian history the positive, religious doctrine of man's relative freedom in the political order was justified philo-

¹ The writer has dealt with this point in 'The Christian Doctrine of Freedom in Relation to Political Totalitarianism', *Christian Polity* (Faber)

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sophically in the doctrine of the Natural Law, to which appeal could always be made in resistance to any claim on the part of the Positive Law of a State to be absolute. In consequence of liberalism's emancipation from the religious basis of freedom for positive ends, the modern world has earned, not a secular freedom, but a drift towards social disintegration that is sending men in self-protection into the arms of oppressive collectivism.

Our task is therefore to recover, in the conditions of the present world, that positively religious conception of human life that will alone save us from the consequence of the assumption that the State is the source of community instead of an instrument of it. Without a recovery of the full expression of the Christian faith in the deliberate and unconscious attitudes of men, it is unlikely that civilization will emerge from the present situation, which is a fortuitous wrangle between plutocracy, proletarianism and dictatorship. Man can only live in fruitful relationship with the State when there is diffused throughout the community a religious outlook that is at once centred in man's spiritual and super-temporal nature, and also is formative of a natural social order in which the State is an important element without being all inclusive. It has been for want of an organic relation between man's secular and spiritual life that the natural social functions of industry, commerce, education, family and regional politics have lost a sense of purpose. The one-dimensional State-and-citizen relationship emerges more and more as the only vital social bond. This has been encouraged by the weaknesses in contemporary religion. There we have, on the one hand, a faith in the supernatural roots and destiny of human life without any conviction that they constitute a call to order the natural functions of society in relation to them. On the other hand, much religion of to-day has no roots in the supernatural Christian dispensation, but draws upon its moral resources to back up some form of secular idealism. So much that passes for Christian leadership gives the impression that its spokesmen account it fortunate that in some or many respects the Christian truth is in agreement with convictions they have derived from some extraneous source.

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A recovery of religion that will so transform society that the problem of the State will naturally find its place depends therefore pre-eminently upon a right relation between the supernatural and the natural elements in human living. It was the generating tension between these upon which von Hugel was never tired of insisting. That message came from the pen of a philosopher. It is necessary that it should be, as it has once been, part of the religious life and outlook of ordinary men. The teaching ministry of the Church must work for that end. Here can be outlined but some of the conditions of it.

VII THE STATE IN A RENEWED CHRISTENDOM

The 'primacy of the spiritual' must be upheld, not as a retreat from the secular tasks of life, but as a condition of handling them aright. Man has a pre-eminent dignity as a child of God, in this aspect of him that makes him more than a child of nature; lies also his tragedy, for it means that he has the power to be false to his nature. That is sin. One consequence is that when social living is cut away from direction imposed by awareness of supernatural reality and from the chastening sense of sin, it does not remain merely secular, but becomes perverted. And at various times and conditions one or other element in human life becomes erected into the end of existence. Christians will therefore always be on the watch for tendencies to idolatries of one kind and another, and will not be swept off their feet into championing one because it is opposing another. State idolatry has come largely as a revolt against, or corrective for, idolatry of the individual or of the economic process or of money. 'The modern mind', says Professor Gilson, 'is quite sufficiently familiarized with the idea of individuality and personality. We might well ask ourselves, whether their importance has not been somewhat exaggerated—no doubt as a kind of reaction against the evils of mass production. Whenever the collective comes to be regarded with a kind of religious awe, as if a suppression of the individual was all that was needed to attain the divine, the individual and personal, in their turn, begin to lay claim to a kind of sanctity and are even put forward as the sole possible bases

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of any genuine religion. Man seems to be incapable of facing an antinomy without worshipping the terms.¹ This is what has happened. because individualism turned out to be false, it is now assumed that some form of collectivist absolutism is divine. A revived consciousness of man as both from beyond history and also as liable to sinful pretensions will alone save us from this to-and-fro movement and from idolatry of some element in the temporal order because it is in opposition to another that has been 'found out'. A fully organic presentation of the Christian Faith should guard men from supposing that to value an institution like the State it is necessary to deny its need of redemption. In history it was in just those phases of Christian thought where the State was accorded a positive divine warrant that its behaviour was most naturally considered matter for judgment and criticism on the part of the Christian mind. And where the tradition held sway that the world was beyond the pale of grace, religion being purely an interior act of faith, the tension between the supernatural and the natural was snapped and theological freehold was given to the secular authority to be as absolute as it pleased. A revived faith, with its stimulating distinctiveness between grace and nature and the fruitful interaction between them, will alone enable men to distinguish between good government and the power-hunger that is always latent, if not expressed, in the sinful men who hold power.

We cannot have a helpful relation between religion, the State and the community unless the social life of the community recovers some more natural order than it has at present. Under such conditions the State is bound to seek more inclusive claims and men to acquiesce in them, while religion is used as a street-refuge in order to provide a respite from the inhuman traffic it makes no effort to direct.

A recall to religion will be a recall to the Christian doctrine of redemption in place of what has so largely taken its place—a blessing upon the world's self-improvement. Redemption means that man has, by laying hold in faith upon the regenerating hand of God in Christ and His Church, been restored to his true nature. Redemption is the presupposition of moral

¹ E. Gilson, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, p. 189.

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effort, not the result of it. Redemption has its influence upon society through the conscience and the mind of the Christian community which has known the touch of grace. And that influence should be at work precisely, too, in detecting where elements in the social order are false to their true and natural function. It will see that the State cannot be true to its specific political function if society is disordered in such a way that financial considerations hold sway over the economics of production and use, if industry seeks to constrain man into a convenience for its own ends, if politics are the unconscious guardian of commercial interests, if art is prostituted as a weapon of efficiency. More positively, a religion anchored to the spiritual and extra-mundane essence of human life will in the workaday assumptions of men enable them to envisage the right order in these things and to struggle for its embodiment. It will help them to know that work is for production, use and enjoyment, that these are for the sake of life, that money is for their proper relationship in action— all this because life on earth is for something beyond. A natural order requires a supernatural stay.

The fundamental problem of the influence of religion and the State upon society is just this question how far society in its habitual attitudes is Christian. If that question can be satisfactorily answered in thought and in life, the problem of Church and State will be seen to be secondary and find its own solution. How far a community is Christian is determined not primarily by its attitude to 'religion' as such, or to the questions that arise when 'Church and State' is discussed: prayer books, sacramental doctrine, ritual questions or synodical government. Nor is it safe to assume that a nation's mind is Christian because the deliberate atheist or materialist movements are not very strong. The question can only be answered in terms of the average person's attitude to the elemental things: work, happiness, bliss, pain, money, the earth, food, production, buying and selling, use and enjoyment of things, love, sex, children, peace, war, life and death, destiny and eternity. How far are these things seen in the two-world context of the Christian revelation? It is round these things that the natural social life springs up. The contributive place of

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each in an organic social order depends upon a continual renewal of mind in the light of God, Freedom and Immortality, for there is a tendency to idolatry in all things human when they cease to be touched by the hand of supernatural grace.

Religion that will speak to men about the things in which they are concerned, with that illumination from its super-temporal source which 'judgeth all things', will be offering the word of deliverance to a generation baffled by its own secular problems. It is illumination and deliverance for which the modern soul is crying. Too often it is offered merely moral advice the supernatural ground of which is completely foreign to it. With the conditions of a natural and liberating social order, in which the collective life fosters what men have it in them to do, proclaimed by religion, the 'indirect power' of the Church over the State can again become a reality. Men will discover that religion holds the secret of harmonizing the inner and the outer life, the conflicts of which are so much a part of the spiritual struggles of our time. And the State can become the expression of men's genuine political consciousness. The tributes given recently to the person of the English monarch are a sign that men find in the institution of monarchy something they can feel is their own, a personal relationship which has become almost impossible in the more specific functions of modern government. The hold which Englishmen insist on maintaining upon the kingship is an earnest of the responsibility which the people are craving to exercise. If it is to be more than a 'vicarious loyalty', in distinction from what appears to be the irrelevant impersonalism and anonymity of the political machine, it may prove the rallying-point of an organic society with religion, State and people in a blessed and fruitful alliance.

IV

THE IDEA OF A NATURAL ORDER

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In the volume of essays entitled *Prospect for Christendom*,¹ of which this is the second, the writers attempt to depict a society which they believe it is historically possible to bring about and which can deserve the name of 'Christendom'. This is not to conceive a society of men perfected by the supernatural power of divine grace. That belongs to the seers of the Church who have recorded their vision of Heaven, from Saint John the Divine to the poet of the *Paradise*. On the other hand, any society which can be called Christendom, will have a strong nucleus of people who are learning through the ministry of saving grace what the Kingdom of God means. They will know that the Kingdom is not a name for a better earth and that it comes from beyond this world. But their experience as conscious members of the Kingdom now will give them an insight into the essential nature of man, which can serve as a criterion for judging the human validity of social activities and their organization.

The task attempted in these essays is to draw the outlines of a social order in which the conscious leadership would be guided by an understanding of the essential nature of the human being, the term 'nature' being used here of what man is in the order of creatures. In this task therefore we can count upon the support of all who believe that man has a real structure and who, through discernment of conscience or insight into the forces of history, have some convictions concerning the permanent needs of men through all phases and periods. This volume therefore presupposes the possibility of Christian and non-Christian co-operation in working for a society which shall reflect the essential nature of man better than that of the recent period in the West, which has been marked by upheavals

¹ Faber and Faber, 1945.

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of a uniquely quickened tempo and catastrophic destructiveness.¹ 'The Christian', writes T. S. Eliot, 'can be satisfied with nothing less than a Christian organization of society—which is not the same thing as a society consisting exclusively of devout Christians. It would be a society in which the natural end of man—virtue and well-being in community—is acknowledged for all, and the supernatural end—beatitude—for those who have eyes to see it.'² Note that acknowledgement of the two ends is the requirement, not the undeviating pursuit of them. Such a society would not necessarily be less sinful in behaviour than any other, but it might well be one where the sinful impulses of man were less totally crushing, where the exercise of good-will was not beset by so many intellectual confusions, and where problems of social good and evil were more in the sphere of the will than at present, when the complexity and unnaturalness of the structure baffles the conscience, the mind and action to an unnecessary degree.

There is a revived desire to-day to find out whether there is a norm of social ordering underlying all the special achievements of an age, a people, or a culture, and what its content is. This concern is aroused by a suspicion that the particular contributions of civilization at each stage have always, and with especial devastation in recent times, been made at the expense of the common natural structure of human existence. Men therefore want to know whether there are some permanent elements of human morphology according to which they can try to build more securely the next phase of civilized life. Such a demand comes at the close of a period of unparalleled confusion, dislocation, and violence. This period has been marked by an evolutionary or dialectical relativism which assumed that all was in flux, including man's fundamental nature, and in its latest phase by a colossal attack in the name of historic destiny upon all general truths about man. Both the eviscerated liberal societies and the violent dictatorial ones represent conflicting movements of a phase in which it was virtually disbelieved that man is a real kind.

¹ The theological and social groundwork of such co-operation has been worked out by J. Maritain in *True Humanism*.

² *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 34.

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Lack of political and social certainty in the democratic communities and their drift towards omniscient State management involve them in a peculiar predicament which raises the same question. While the genuine liberal philosophy had its roots in the acknowledgement of a general truth about man, this general truth has lost its hold upon our culture.¹ The reason is that the isolated truth of the priority of the person over the social process can only become effective when it is part of a whole series of relations that make up a natural order.

Again, there is very considerable discussion about the possibility of a more Christian pattern of society, among circles of believers and unbelievers, who hold that the ethical content of our Western Civilization is still fundamentally Christian. But the confusions of that discussion, the emptiness of its advice, the prevalent conditional note 'if only men acted Christianly' instead of the authentic Christian indicative 'this is the true nature and end of man' as well as the open attack upon the ethics by the new social paganisms in order to heal the cleft between morals and dogma all this establishes the truth that moral aims for society cannot be effective if they stand alone as objects of the social will. Such aims require support in metaphysical certainty or dogma, in emotional and cultural bent largely induced by the habits of a community, and in the organization of social activities.

I THE GOSPEL AND NATURAL ORDER

The idea of a natural order is not peculiar to Christianity. It belongs, with or without the name, to all religion which has a social and ethical content, and to all social ethics whether religious or secular. These all imply two realities: the actual state of man, which is separated from or in conflict with his good, and the good of man, which is held to be the fulfilment or recovery of his true nature. The Christian Faith introduces a complication into this picture, for it asserts that the power by which man departs from his essential nature cannot effect the recovery without the action of Divine Grace which is super-

¹ For a diagnosis of this loss see *The Religious Prospect* by the present writer

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natural. Grace is given from beyond his nature as an embodied spirit, and yet his fulfilment is not complete without it.¹

The question has been sufficiently acute whether the transcendent truths of the Christian Gospel and the idea of a Natural Law which reflects man's archetypal nature have anything to do with one another, and there are not wanting theologians who hold that the doctrine of the *Lex Naturae* is foreign to the Gospel, if not in fact a kind of pagan apostasy from it. While it has to be said that the kind of truth about Man which the Gospel proclaims is of an entirely different kind from that enshrined in any doctrine of the Natural Order, there are a number of historical facts which *prima facie* point to some inevitable link between them. First of all, with Christianity there emerged immediately a problem of the relation of the Church to each existing historic community in which the Church ministered. While Christianity provided a unifying force between societies with entirely different roots, it did so by introducing a tension of another kind, the tension between historic communities with their own particular life and the Church as custodian of the universal, common elements in human existence. That is why, at one stage, Christianity, becoming a formative influence in society, welcomed and adopted the pagan ideas of a natural law that belonged to man as man—distinct from his status in a particular historic setting. So these two things: the supernatural mystery of the Church and the supernatural law of justice, were two strata of the soil on which a new kind of unity was grown—a unity which overarched the bounds set by geographical, cultural, and occupational circumstances. Then, the recent epoch of liberal and relativist humanism, which has deleted all supernatural reality from its convictions more thoroughly than any previous period, is also the one which first secularized and then dropped the whole idea of a natural order for man and has now bred an anti-liberal attack upon it. Again, the totalitarian revolutions, which are merely collective revolts of immanentist and relativist humanism against individualist and functional embodiments of the

¹ This is the riddle which the Catholic Theology of man's loss of integrity in the Fall, of the *donum superadditum* and of sanctifying Grace, attempts to answer and, in the opinion of its critics, answers wrongly.

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same thing, present a common front against the ethics and dogma of Christianity on the one hand, and against all ideas of a general truth about all men on the other. Finally, the very religious liberalism which has cut the transcendent and redemptive note out of Christian teaching and replaced it with an immanentist moralism, has been equally negligent of the Catholic conception of Natural Law. While it is only just to add that serious theological Protestantism rejects the general truth of the Natural Law as a rival to Gospel Christianity, it must be added that it is in the Protestant ethos, where it has abandoned its authentic Reformation Theology, that the drift towards a purely immanentist and relativist ethics has gone farthest.

It should be noted, in addition, that in both the theological and legal fields, the conception of the Natural Law crops up as of a kind of elemental necessity after periods of disuse or disbelief in it.¹

Are these historical connections between Christianity and the idea of a Natural Order merely contingent or is there an inherent and derivative link between them? The Gospel is the Word of the transcendent God spoken in the flesh of Christ to man in his actual setting in the world. It addresses him from beyond all that makes up that setting and speaks to all men from the one particular historical context in which Jesus Christ was himself set. The organized life of that particular historical setting as such rejected Him, because he spoke *to* men in that setting, not through it, as its representatives expected Him to. Nor would any other historic setting have received Him, for 'the world comprehends Him not' while it is always demanding that it shall 'comprehend' Him in some historic order or other. The Gospel speaks to each man that word of truth about *himself* which is not given in and through and by his setting in nature, history and society. But the truth about himself is the truth about him in his setting, the truth that this one being who is related to the world process in time is in that very relation also related to Eternity above and behind time. It is the

¹ In Theology, cf H. Rommen, *Die Ewige Wiederkehr des Naturrechts* (Leipzig). In Jurisprudence, C. G. Haines, *The Revival of Natural Law Concepts* (Harvard).

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truth of his link, in the innermost centre of his being, with God—the link which is, which cannot be snapped, but which can be denied. When it is denied it does not cease to operate: but its centrifugal force is edged outwards on to some less central layer of man's existence. Then man becomes ex-centric. On the other hand, it only remains operative as truly central when it is known as held in being from God the supreme Spirit and submitted to Him.

There are two layers of man's existence which are most easily mistaken for the spiritual centre itself, the one nearest and the one farthest from the centre—namely reason and vitality. In reason, which is the activity of the spirit in its first work of extroversion, man seeks by his own general ideas to transcend the determinism of his concrete setting, to express the fact that he is not completely involved in Nature and history and society.¹ But when this attempt is made to find in reason the operative centre of human existence (so seductive an attempt because reason masters so much outside itself) man is in the sphere of general truths. God, then, whether denied or acknowledged, makes His claim upon man, as Law. And God is the source of Law, of that aspect of existence handled by reason and capable of being apprehended in terms of what is general and common to its parts. He is its source as Creator. But this is not the Gospel. The Gospel is the news that this *particular* man, whether it is I or you or the other man, has his real innermost meaning in the personal love of God for him. The Gospel is the particular truth about each man, namely that his being is held in existence by the transcendent God.²

Reason and law deal with generalities and are thereby overcome by the Gospel, and may not be mistaken for it. Yet Law and Gospel have a certain alliance in face of the perpetual threat of vitalist, cosmic, or historic interpretations, in which man misprojects his spirit upon the material, vital, and temporal

¹ One instalment of this work is human language itself, cf. *The Miraculous Birth of Language*, by R. A. Wilson (Guild Books)

² Spiritual directors know what a hard but necessary step it is for a Christian to give up comparing himself with others, for better or for worse, and to learn what he is and is called to be in terms of God's word to him

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orders.¹ All forms of naturalism and immanentism are in contradiction to the Gospel of Grace and to rationally apprehended law, both of which tell of man as standing somewhat outside and above the flux of events, the one by its declaration of the particularity of each man in God, the other by its general truths which ignore the particularity of each. The Gospel truth of the unique, unrepeatable, individual meaning of each man has therefore its own universalism, for every man is a particular man. 'It is only fellowship with God which gives value to the individual,' writes Troeltsch, 'and it is only in common fellowship with God, in a realm of supernatural values, that natural differences disappear . . . In the last resort the idea of fellowship springs from the fact that those who are being purified for the sake of God meet in Him. . . . Thus out of an absolute individualism there arises a universalism which is equally absolute.'² Upon this rests the intense community feeling of the early Church. Nothing is more pathetic than the way preachers try to establish the supernatural altruism of the Christian Fellowship by presenting the New Testament as a collectivist manifesto. It is precisely the significance the believer finds in his relation to God, and no longer in terms of any concrete historical setting, that allows him to participate in that setting with a status not given by it. He participates in it therefore without making demands upon it, that is, so far as his faith is complete, with utter charity.

The Gospel therefore has its own universalism and requires its own fellowship overlapping all other historic groupings of men. It differs from the generalities of natural law and is at war with it if the latter presumes to define the central human fact of each man. But the Gospel upholds the validity of law, rationally conceived, on the plane of law; and upholds it above

¹ This is the last and supreme temptation, to escape from the problem of individuality and of reason—by immersion in the cosmic flux. For a poetic account see the final page of G. Flaubert, *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, 'O bonheur! bonheur! j'ai vu naître la vie, j'ai vu le mouvement commencer. Je voudrais . . . descendre jusqu'au fond de la matière—être la matière.'

² *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, ch. 1, pp. 55 sqq. (Eng. translation, Allen and Unwin).

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all when it is denied; when, for instance, there is any tendency to give man his significance simply as an item in the historic process, or to achieve his spiritual quietus by submerging him in the cosmic flux. On the other hand, when rational *idées générales* are mistakenly taken as identifying the central human fact, then there appears, in contrast, a certain affinity between the concrete particularity of the Gospel truth and the variety of particular concrete existences thrown up by Nature and History. Naturalism, and that form of it which makes history define and guide man, are therefore easily taken as being nearer the Gospel truth than the generalizations of reason and law and ethics, when these become dominant abstractions from concrete situations. Hence the common false identification of Faith and Life, of Grace and Vitality, in periods when an arid or idealistic reason has failed to handle the real stubborn problems of humanity in the concrete.

The Gospel truth about man is one of concrete personal particularity. The doctrine it sustains is therefore at once universal and particular. Where reason is held to be the key of existence we have a doctrine of *idées générales*, that is a doctrine exclusively universal; and where natural or historic doctrines hold sway, some limited part of the cosmic or historic process is held to be the key of existence, and we have a doctrine exclusively particular.¹ Accordingly, the Gospel truth affirms not only, as does rationalism in its own way, a universal treatment of man, but also, as do natural or historic views in their own way, a particular treatment of man. Nevertheless, when reason exalts the common truths it knows about man into a central constituent principle the Gospel is bound to dethrone the supremacy of reason, and to that end may well make cause with non-Christian forces which oppose *idées générales* in the name of concrete historical and natural process. And on the other hand, when historical or natural dogmas confuse their own notions of man's concrete existence with the central spiritual

¹ If it takes the form of *evolution*, then it is the development of the modern West that is held to be the bearer of man's fulfilment. In political forms it may be British political and cultural leadership or Nazi *Gemeinschaft* or American commercial progressivism.

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concreteness which Christianity upholds, the Gospel may well welcome and adopt the ideas of a natural law belonging to man as man, distinct from his status in a particular setting.

The Gospel gives, therefore, its own meaning to the general truth from which Christian thinkers derive their ideas of an order 'natural to man'. That meaning confronts both idealistic universal interpretations and particular social ones. These two are in fact in perpetual opposition in the course of human history, and this tug-of-war points to a central truth which each of them distorts in its own way.

II MAN A SPIRIT-CENTRED ORGANISM

The centrality of the spirit in man has to be understood not as the existence of a central point or force surrounded by non-spiritual layers, but as a penetrating operative reality which determines the character of human activity in all its layers. No human activity is non-spiritual. Man neither eats nor makes love merely as an animal. Nor of course are the political and economic activities of his existence entirely non-spiritual. Even his non-spiritual theories of existence are self-disproved when applied to himself.

The spirit-centred structure of man is the ground both of the proper place of each activity and of the misplacement of one or more of them. The centrality of the spirit in man has thus a dual and ambivalent force. On the one hand, it is a fact of his existence and belongs to him by creation; all his doings are those of a being in whom the spiritual centre is involved with non-spiritual reality and permeates it. In another sense the spirit--because it is spirit and not Nature--can deny its centrality and eject itself somewhere else--and the particular activity into which it is injected is treated as the human *centrum*. Recent events and a good deal of older history provide the story of man's spiritual fixation upon his political, his technical, or his trading activities, his class or his race. This is the sociological expression of ego-centricity, which is precisely the opposite of the centrality of the spirit as the basic fact of human existence. The ego, which is the spirit becoming an object to itself, identifies itself with activities and relationships and falsi-

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fies them. This is the *ψυχικός* man of Saint Paul, *le moi haïssable* of Pascal. Christianity means the possibility of the removal of the ego from individuality. The soul, turned inside-in, now looks outward with love instead of curling in on itself. The human spirit recovers its centrality, its freedom, because it is open inwards to God.¹ Man finds God speaking through him about his relationships and activities. The centrality of the human spirit consists in its being the outpost on the world of the free, creative activity of God, it shares in a delegated sense in the transcendent quality of the Holy Spirit. And because the human spirit belongs by its nature to the transcendent Divine Being, when man violates in any level of his consciousness that essential dependence upon ('hanging from') God, then the human function on to which the spirit of man is projected is exalted into the place of God. Then the authority and proper 'natural' place of the other categories is threatened—and life is involved in a conflict of functional egoisms. Periods of rationalism, for instance, where human life is supposed to be directed towards its fulfilment by reason only, are always reacted against by an uprush of emotional and romantic forces. When the State claims what only God may claim, the proper place not only of politics, but of the arts and industries, is denied. The natural order is violated.

So the centrality of the spirit in man has a sociological as well as a personal force. In the personal life the true centrality cannot be recovered by the individual man through his own willing; he must lose his self in the Divine Action operating upon and through him, a process begun and carried through by the spiritual culture we call the practice of religion. So also, the centrality of the spirit in its sociological force cannot be recovered by moral desire alone, but requires that this desire be sustained and that real will be formed out of it, by a social order that provides a habitat for the soul. In other words human living becomes ex-centric not only when the human spirit, in stark idolatry, deifies one of its powers, such as that of reason, poli-

¹ This is what Kierkegaard means by becoming subjective, 'this individual', and it is almost the opposite of what we mean by subjectivism and individualism.

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tics, sex, or money; but also and equally when, however fine its intentions, it exercises any of these powers on a plane which does not belong to it.

The freedom of the Christian man, of the Pauline *πνευματικός* man, is won by that surrender to God which life in Christ makes possible. It is the freedom in which he is delivered from feeling inwardly crushed by being involved in the social disorder in which he lives. He accepts that as a fact of his existence and can then take up an attitude which is capable of changing the disorder in an objectively right way. But he knows that short of the Kingdom of God that inner freedom is always being lost unless he uses its initial gifts to build up a culture of the soul by prayer and inwardness and discipline, and by identification with the drama of the redeeming agony and risen power of Christ. He knows that he obtained this freedom only because God knows that he could do nothing to gain it—solely by virtue of His love which asks for *no quid pro quo*.

So the Christian who knows what his salvation means, knows also when he turns to the organized public life of man, that *the natural order* of human life, though in no sense commensurate with the freedom of the Christian man, is nevertheless something necessary for the life of all men. Necessary, not only because it is a norm which would correct his life, but because it is a noumenal reality which tugs at him all the time; he therefore suffers in the alienation because it is never a complete alienation. The Christian believer wants this conflict lessened. For one thing he is himself in it; though his spiritual freedom prevents his being overwhelmed by it, he knows the crucial inner struggle of surrender that is the cost of holding on to this freedom. But for a deeper reason he wants the conflict lessened for all men, and its meaning universally elucidated, namely in order that God's will may be done by men fulfilling their natural perfection.

A society which reflected in its culture something of a natural order would not ensure the natural perfection of man, but it would free his mind from confusions and his will from frustrations which come from mistaking a conflict of social purposes for a defect in the nature of things or for the effects of conscious human egoism. Where he failed, the failure would

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be more directly moral.¹ No such society exists, but societies are comparable by the extent to which they approach a natural order, in all or some of their relationships, or depart from it.

Man is never free from the 'pondus' or tug of the natural order in his being, however contradicted it is in his personal action and the false structure of his societies. But the double fact that it holds him and that he also contradicts it, is evidence that his natural life is not a self-contained whole. It is a dependent relation to the transcendent, supernatural reality of God. Because of this he has the freedom to contravene his own nature by a denial of his dependence. This is only possible by the freedom given in it by God Who is God not only by Nature but also by Grace. This cannot be expressed speculatively, but only by that mythological mode of Genesis which posits a relationship to God beyond that of the human nature created to the Creator, namely a relationship of responsible obedience and worship, and which states the Fall of Man as due to the

¹ Cf V Soloviev: 'Mankind is composed of men, but it is not constituted by them, the fundamental social bonds do not depend on personal will—on the contrary, individual life is conditioned by them. That is why it is as impossible to make mankind better by dealing directly with particular persons as it is to cure an organic disease by treating each cell or fibre separately.

'The unique Just Man, who was of himself and personally perfect and needed no "reign of justice" in society, was one who was God before he became man. In him was all righteousness and justice, but we can lay hold on his righteousness not as individuals but only collectively, *with the whole universe*' *God, Man, and the Church* (James Clarke, pp. 172, 173).

T. S. Eliot 'A Christian education would primarily train people to be able to think in Christian categories, though it would not compel belief and would not impose the necessity for insincere profession of belief. What the rulers believed would be less important than the belief to which they would be obliged to conform. And a sceptical or indifferent statesman, working within a Christian frame, might be more effective than a devout Christian statesman obliged to conform to a secular frame' *The Idea of a Christian Society* (Faber & Faber, p. 28).

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contravention of this law of his existence over and above his creaturhood as part of created Nature.¹

On the other hand, though the contradiction violates it does not destroy the pull of his true nature. If his existence only consisted in his Nature, then the violation of his Nature would leave no room for the pull back which all the time operates upon him.

The relation of the Gospel to the idea of a Natural order can now be summarized. The Gospel is the offer of the saving Grace of the transcendent God to man who cannot save himself by any power in his immanent life. It establishes the transcendence of God who creates, who is present to, and who loves the man who in the immanent order toils for the good. It is because God is transcendent as well as immanent that man can violate the conditions of his nature by denying the dependence of his existence upon something over and above his Nature, namely God. It is also because this dependent link continues to exist even when it is denied that man experiences a pull back towards it. Two facts of man's natural existence even in his alienation, shows this pulling back operating upon him. One is his elaboration of morality and law to prevent human sinfulness from destroying human existence. Positive law is at the same time the consequence of man's alienation from his true nature and also an expression of its continued operative power. It tells that he is never merely the creature of Nature and History but is held by his link with the transcendent reality.

The other fact is the action and reaction of man's dominant ideas about himself, to which this essay has already referred. A culture which gives central place to one activity or faculty of human life is displaced by one which appears to correct it and to be more 'natural' to man. His 'natural' never allows him collectively to remain 'ex-centric' but in time pulls it over to another order, though this revolutionary process in the immanent order never finds equilibrium. In so far as a generation is aware of the moving forces which are at work and the trans-

¹ Throughout this essay I have tried to distinguish man's nature which transcends as well as includes his part in the Natural world from his Nature, connoting just that participation, by using a small 'n' in the first case and a capital in the second.

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cent origin of what it is seeking, it can, at least, make for a relatively happier and more stable culture. And when, because of human pretensions, this culture is, as it must be, superseded in its turn, the subsequent transition is far more likely to be positive and human than our recent blind and destructive cataclysms have been.

The Natural Order of human life is therefore *transcendent*, in that it is essentially dependent upon God although He is wholly distinct from it, it is *noumenal*, in that its pattern is not a phenomenon to be observed, but its true meaning can be apprehended only by human intelligence, it is *eschatological*, in that it reaches its fulfilment only in God's final perfecting of Creation. The natural order affects the phenomena of human cultures but is never embodied totally in any of them. Men are led to cynical opportunism or impotent relativism when this fact of the Natural Order is denied; they are led to utopian illusions and ideological tyrannies when it is assumed to be immanent in one set of social purposes and the group of men who put these purposes into practice. The Natural Order exists as a norm and an operative force in man as such.¹ The conscious task of any generation is to discover and to work with it. This necessarily takes the form of correcting the ways in which it has been violated in the previous period.

III. NATURAL ORDER AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

If we look at the historical expressions of the Natural Law we see them as formulations or embodiments of custom, dealing with certain problems which arise out of frequent violations of it.² Such violations are due either to the perennial effects of

¹ This existence of the Natural Order as a centripetal force seems to correspond to what Aquinas calls by the awkward word '*Synderesis*' which underlies conscience and the natural reason. It is not a faculty but a natural habit. '*Synderesis non est potentia, sed habitus naturalis*' *Summa* I, lxxix, 12c cf. H. Rommen, op. cit., '*Das Naturrecht geht auf zum unsterblichen Besitz des menschlichen Geistes*', p. 224.

² For the theory of the Natural Law from Patristic times to Saint Thomas Aquinas, vide J. Dalby, *The Catholic Conception of the Law of Nature* (S P C K.), an excellent summary in pamphlet form.

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man's sinfulness or to the particular distortions in the sociological culture of a period. In the Middle Ages, for instance, the subjects dealt with were those in which there were widespread disorders in practice, such as the relation of rulership and law, the ethics of buying and selling, moneylending, and so on.¹ There was no complete scheme of Natural Law, and it would therefore be misleading to suppose that where some aspect of human life passed unmentioned, there must necessarily have been chaos in it. On the contrary, the probability is that that part of life was functioning fairly well, that it presented straightforward practical difficulties only, and so did not raise theoretical questions. Every period or culture has its own pattern of certainties and problems, and what seem certain to one period of culture may well define the problems of another. It is, however, the problems that provoke conscious and deliberate provision of guidance.

One assumption, so general in the past that it was never formally included in teaching about Natural Law, was that the family is the primary social unit. In spite of its insistence upon the universal and particular nature of the human spirit, the Christian tradition has taken the family as the cradle in which that spiritual nature begins its cultivation. Christian teaching thus builds upon the natural history of the family as the mediating reality between man as part of Nature and history, and man as a responsible spiritual being who therefrom enters into associations with other men, proceeds to transform the earth, and to establish his link with the gods. There is in the family a total personal relationship between its members, beginning with the union of the man and woman who found it. The child starts life with natural ties which are the relations of whole persons to one another. From this environment he learns to enter into associations for common purposes with a number of other groups, and often with only one or two parts of his life; for instance his work, his play, citizenship, or culture. And in this total personal relationship of a natural community there is included in germ the main tasks with which each young member will associate sectionally. The family is more than a

¹ Similarly, dogmatic theology was developed in connection of actual heresies

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biological-spiritual fact. It is, in the first place, a cultural nursery in which the young have transmitted to them some knowledge of how to live well in addition to the knowledge of how to provide for their physical existence. To this end they remain within the parental sphere after they have reached the stage of being able to feed themselves. And the family is, in the second place, a miniature government. By the exercise of authority and by the limitation of individual will through the necessity to act with others in a bond that cannot be escaped, blended with the sense of security from outside threats, the sense of collective obligation is cultivated. And thirdly, the family is an economic structure. Making the best all-round use of what comes into the household is the art which gives the name to the science of economics. If economic behaviour is concerned with 'the disposing of scarce means for given ends' then it is in the family that the individual first sees the problem and learns to deal with it.

The truth that the family is the elemental, and therefore the normative, social unit, is the sociological expression of the fact that man finds his life more completely fulfilled in the sharing of a common total life with others, than in relations of association into which he must enter to pursue common tasks, for in these others are bound to him and he to them, for the sake of the task. In relations of association, as such, the individual is bound to be treated primarily as an agent for performing a function, and according to his contribution. This is a necessary part of man's training, but if the family is maimed in the interests of any economic, political, or cultural good, the natural law is violated, for then the pattern of his relationships as a total person is made subservient to one of his specialized activities.

Now, like all other priorities in the natural order this priority of the family over other social relationships is a metaphysical or sociological, and not a moral priority. It expresses a more central and inclusive bond than the other relationships. But man's responsibility in relationships of association and contract may involve a greater moral achievement than in this bond of the family which is so close to Nature. And just because the family bond expresses in its limited field loyalties of persons in

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their total life to one another, it has the danger of displacing the supernatural loyalty of man to God. So we have the New Testament warnings that the following of Christ may be hindered by family ties more than by any other interest, and the renunciation of family loyalties in the call of religious vocations is the institutional witness to the truth that domestic loyalties are not final for the Christian. This is a good illustration of the principle, laid down earlier in this chapter, that a particular layer of man's social activity is only kept true to its proper place in the social order, when it is recognized that the loyalty for which it calls stands *under* man's super-temporal loyalty to God.

There are some other priorities which were taken for granted in earlier periods of Christendom and which now have to be brought under a formulation of a natural order because they have been denied by modern civilization on a large scale. Only the most general ones can be indicated here.

The cultural side of life, its arts, knowledge and ceremonies -- all that qualifies life and does not merely preserve it -- has a precedence over politics and economic activity. Again, it is a metaphysical and not a physical or moral precedence. Life must be sustained by economic activity, it must be protected and co-ordinated by politics, before it can be enriched and adorned. These have a physical priority over the cultural stratum. And, also, the practice of the arts which adorn life, whether aesthetic, scientific, or spiritual, is in no sense morally higher than that of government, industry, or commerce. Cultural activities have a metaphysical priority in that in them the spirit of man operates most centrally from within outwards, less conditioned by the determinisms which of necessity belong to political and economic activities. Cultural goods grow by the sharing of them, whereas politics is largely the checking of power by power and economics is concerned with the making and distribution of things and the comparison of effort put forward with the satisfactions gained. Cultural bonds are more essentially spiritual and universal than political or economic ones. Therefore a society in which the cultural life has not a certain priority in this sense violates the natural order of man's inner structure. It can be violated in several ways: if provision

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is not made for people to teach and carry on the religious, educational, aesthetic, and scientific arts, if any class is so exhausted in one of the more practical tasks that it has no opportunity, energy, or guidance for cultural pursuits, if the cultural domain is treated as an adjunct for political consolidation, as this sphere is in totalitarian societies, or if it is prostituted to keep the economic process going, as it largely is in the democracies.

The political functions include government, maintenance of military power, law, and the police, and the establishment of a balance of rights and duties. Politics represents the collective effort of the spirit of man to protect life from the threat which resides in the egoism of men and groups and to co-ordinate on the basis of certain common values the activities of organized society. In itself the political function is more involved in the determinisms of nature and history than the cultural, but it is nevertheless a form of spiritual mastery over them. It has therefore its own moral responsibility. This is not that of forming the ethical and cultural purposes for men, but of enabling men with diverse non-political purposes to live with that degree of solidarity which a common citizenship requires.

The economic activity is in itself the most tied to physical realities. By it men transform material from the earth and move it about. In developed societies economic activity is much more than spending effort upon material. The organization of production and distribution represents a great impact of the human spirit upon the physical and human realities. Because of this real but limited control of material facts and processes by will and intelligence, the economic sphere is one where the natural order is to-day most violently deranged. This happens in two opposite ways: when man's spiritual control over economic life is in effect denied, and when the limitations upon that control are similarly denied.

The first denial takes place when real political aims are given up or defeated by forms of economic behaviour which are not dictated by the physical and energy basis of economics. For instance, one of the factors in our British failure to oppose aggression was the extent to which the needs of trade were regarded as paramount and mistaken for real economic needs.

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Now, when policy assumes that economic satisfactions and economic bonds are supreme in human relations, it is often called to account by men themselves brushing aside rational economic calculations and striving for some political or cultural goal even at the cost of conflict and war. And in moments of great human tension men seek out their cultural competitors in preference to political ones, and political ones in preference to economic ones.

When the cultural and political aims of men are not given their essential priority over economic purposes, in the organization and habitual attitudes of society, economic means and ends become reversed. Now, for instance, employment is treated as an economic, and even as a political, aim; whereas it is a necessary expenditure of effort, varying according to the skill of the community in drawing energy direct from the earth, so as to supply the physical basis of personal, political, and cultural achievement. And when this treatment of employment as a goal is defended on the moral ground that we cannot have the awful spectacle of the unemployed, it only proves that attempts to satisfy moral requirements without bothering about other aspects of the natural order, are bound to be ridiculous.

On the other hand, man's technical and organizational handling of the world, which is the work of the spirit, leads him to seek unnatural domination of the limitations to which economic activity is subject. This provokes colossal conflicts of purposes within economic life itself. While production and distribution are logically secondary to use and enjoyment of things, historically we have in our modern world reached a position where the community is expected to cultivate needs to satisfy the productive and trading agents' need to be kept going. This diversion of means and ends is carried a step farther when production is directed by the interests of exchange and both these by the dominant interests of the money-lending power. This all means that the physical *raison d'être* of economic activity becomes subject to highly organized devices of ability in which spiritual control over things and men has become a power in itself, used for gain or other satisfactions, divorced from economic ends.

The primary economic activity is rooted in the region where

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its material is to be had. This is the natural economic basis of the social and cultural life of that region. The activity of its members can overspill into economic relations with other communities. But if it is more than an overflow that exchanges goods and services between societies relatively whole in their economic balance, there comes about a disintegrating effect upon the community centres themselves. Greater specialization between regions into primary and secondary producers on the one hand, or close links between narrow, strong economic interests across real community-boundaries, like heavy industry, commerce, or finance, on the other, tend to destroy the proper hierarchy of social functions in each community. These tendencies also exacerbate international rivalry, in spite of the rationalized belief that they diminish it. World trade is an expression of man's will and intelligence over material limitations—that is the work of the human spirit—but when it proceeds to the point where other facts of his existence which require local growth are despised or the attempt is made to stretch them to fit the economic interdependence, the break-up of community is imminent in every part concerned. Cultural excellence spreads abroad when it has been attained in one region; so very often does political achievement. Economic relations can only be mutually beneficial when they are of the same kind, spreading from healthy centres. This century has witnessed a colossal endeavour to cure economic dislocations within each region by seeking to extend economic relations over wider and wider areas. So our civilization presupposes more and more secondary and trading activity as the main economic function, with food producing and the building up of healthy regions as regrettable menial necessities. This is the result of neglecting both the proper obedience to the organic basis of community life and the fact that men will not work a society where the demands of their psychic, cultural, and political life are maimed for the sake of a delusive rational economic world scheme, even when they do not detect that it has become a vested interest overriding all cultural and political loyalties.

Where the natural order is seriously contravened in any set of relations the disorder infects all the others. Particularly, each activity which is out of its proper place or disordered within,

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tends to prey upon the activity above it in the natural scale. Within the economic layer itself, the most instrumental part is money. When money becomes the commodity of a vast business in lending and exchange, it ceases to be a true distributive mechanism. In consequence trade in goods and services becomes secondary to exchanging and lending money and to the business of credit-creating institutions, then trade calls the tune of the productive enterprise of communities, and the personal consumer becomes a doped and 'propaganded' agent for making production possible, whereas the use and enjoyment which he wants of things should be the purpose of the whole economic process.

The unnatural order here then draws politics away from its proper function and it becomes a rescue agency for economic collapse. Members of parliament are expected to 'represent' this or that business interest, success in economic enterprise is supposed to be a qualification for rulership; and a new host of controllers, officials, and planners comes into being. This gives a further shove to the tendency which makes for the multiplication of activity as an end to which all economic purposes are subordinate, and the true end of meeting natural human needs is obscured.

In order to avoid the worst effects of economic and political disintegration education and moral training are then called for, as an aid to the better working of the disordered thing, and the Churches even are expected to provide a spiritual, 'dynamic' social leadership. Education and morals lose their authentic role; religion loses that supernatural basis which has in the days of the Church's power enabled it to speak with authority about the natural order, and it becomes merely the medium of expression for the national soul in its terrestrial moral struggle.

When the conception of a natural order is lost nothing has its proper autonomy, and this loss goes *pari passu* with loss of belief in supernatural reality. It is only when men are ready for the continued task of remaking their order of life in the light of their loyalty to the divine reality which transcends, while it provides the pivot of, the immanent order itself, that the true autonomy of each function is assured. Where there is no transcendent point of reference, there is no datum for the natural

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order in the immanent sphere; this becomes the field of an unguided scramble for power among the organized functions themselves. To secure and uphold the secular autonomy of every valid human activity is therefore a task of theological and religious responsibility. All merely anthropological dogmas spring 'from the analysis of situations which have already passed away'.¹ All secular interpretations are bound to be dated, though they may preserve the illusion of holding on to the permanent core of human reality, and all doctrines which assume inevitable tendencies of the human mind are generalized mythologies derived from universalizing a limited historical experience. Only a theological conception of a natural order can identify the central permanent data, for these inhere in the relation of the human spirit to the transcendent source of all existence.

¹ K. Mannheim, *Man and Society* (Kegan Paul), p. 223.

V

THE TRAGEDY OF WAR AND THE HOPE OF PEACE

(1937)

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I

It is surprising and distressing that Christian thinkers have made so little use of the specific Christian understanding of human nature in expressing the Church's concern for the solution of the problem of war. This failure is twofold. First, Christians have been content to see war as a directly moral problem, the consequence of the conscious will of nations and peoples; they have been impressed with the terrible results of war, but they have *not* detected its tragic nature, the tragedy of its origin. The modern war situation, from and including the Great War, should have taught us that war in modern times is the most blatant expression of the tragic nature of man. It appears as the final result of a number of forces in society which operate in peace-time without any consciously aggressive intention. Indeed the arrival of the final result in conflict is resisted, postponed, feared and planned against in most heroic fashion. We see that many of these forces are the desires of peoples for certain valid satisfactions. War comes as the last tragic resort by which they definitely seek the fulfilment of satisfactions they know no less terrible way of obtaining, as the emotional release of psychic and social tensions brought about by frustration or as the desperate hope of averting a threat to their cherished way of life. This tragic nature of war is seen in the way men speak of it. The Church's litanies include it among evils from which we pray to be delivered; it is something men and nations are 'drawn into'; it 'breaks out' and it is regarded increasingly as a calamitous necessity rather than a deliberate enterprise.

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The second reason why there is little distinctive Christian understanding of war is simply that there is little understanding of the specifically Christian gospel. Christians have based their peace efforts upon the assumption that war is within the sphere of conscious and moral ideals, whereas they should have known that war persists to-day in defiance of very widespread desires for 'no more war'. And Christians should have seen that this is the very kind of problem which the Christian Revelation has especially understood and met. The Christian message is not unique in its attitude to 'the wicked world', but in its contrast to 'the good world'. The world does not need the Church to give it moral ideals, it has plenty of these and to spare. 'The good world' needs the Faith, because its final tragic problem is not the poverty of its aims, but its inability to follow them. It needs redemption, not advice. The Church should know that it is fruitless to make moral appeals to men who are not in a position to respond. Many a drunkard wants to be sober, and many a thief to be honest, but their problem is that they cannot do what they want. There is the divided will described by Saint Paul 'What I would not that I do'. Advice to keep the moral law is futile until the person is healed and reintegrated. Then he can function as a responsible being 'I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou hast set my heart at liberty'. The redemption of the whole man is the work of Christ. But the need for redemption in man as such should have put our Christian works for peace on to a much surer track than they have hitherto found.

It might have been expected that they would have seen the tragic nature of the origin of war, and identified this problem as one which their knowledge of the nature of man as sinful and needing redemption could particularly illuminate. The fact is that our modern religion has been almost entirely an *imperative*, telling men what they ought to do, whereas the Gospel is primarily an *indicative*, a word about what is the nature of God, the world and man. It contains therefore the truth about the nature of the forces acting in and upon human nature, both in its personal life and social organization. Its resources are tested most distinctively not in distinguishing between bad and good aims, but in detecting and overcoming

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forces which defeat the good aims of men. Christian leadership in this matter of war has been deplorable because this essentially religious outlook has been ignored or confined to the purely personal sphere. In public affairs the voice of Christian statesmanship has been merely a pious commendation of the world's ineffective moralism. It has spoken nobly and persistently in moral exhortation of peoples to trust in and support international legal machinery for peace, blind to the fact that success of such international legal machinery presupposes the very conditions the absence of which is the possibility of war.

At this time, after the colossal peace efforts of the inter-war years proved so frail, it will be fatal if the Christian Church has no better word than desperate appeals to support similar ones in the future or to suggest that Collective Security and international-mindedness are *the* message of the Church on this matter. It is wicked and false to suggest that if these things fail, the problem of peace is hopeless or that we are back in a condition of international rapacity. The Church has no business to be dismayed at the failure of secular idealism. In fact it is its business to maintain and revivify hope when the world's ideals collapse. A condition of this is that we as Christians shall have disentangled ourselves from the whole diagnosis of the war situation which is accepted by secular idealism. The specifically Christian message can never be merely a better answer to the world's problem as stated in the world's own way, however noble the world's interpreters may be; still less can it be taking the world's answer to its own problem and trying to give it a kind of religious intensity. No message about the world is truly Christian if it does not first of all restate the nature of the world's problem, for the Christian Faith is primarily a doctrine of the nature of what is actual; and here resides its radical contrast to the world and its answer to the ineffective moralism of the world. By means of the specific Christian understanding of the nature of man and the forces that operate within and upon him, it should be possible to arrive at a Christian understanding of war and a real message of hope for its cure. But this must be clearly distinguished from the diagnoses of secular idealism, so that hope does not disappear when these diagnoses are proved false by the course of events.

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II. THE TRAGEDY OF WAR

The modern war situation reveals by itself its tragic nature. It has been expressed as 'everybody's fear of a war that nobody wants' It is the problem of the disparity between the aims of men and their achievement; the very problem that the gospel of redemption is given to deal with. Therefore no mere exhortation for intensifying or extending the good aims of men is of any real use. To advise people to be peace-minded or to be international-minded is as futile as recommending health to a sick man. The war problem is just that they have found no way of being these things effectively. Nor is it of much greater help reasoning publicly that war will not ultimately pay, and that the objectives men seek in it will be deceptive. One of the major factors in creating a dangerous war situation to-day is that peace doesn't pay and *its* promises have been deceptive.

It is not here pretended that there are no definitely evil forces behind war and that poor innocent humanity is being swept into something which has no relation to human nature. But it is contended that sinful human nature does not naturally tend to crystallize itself in warfare between nations, and that its effect is to be sought rather in its indirect influence upon the defeat of men's deliberate objectives. There are certainly evil factors in man which thrive by war and which unconsciously support it, and no Christian peace effort may ignore them. Christian hope means that having reckoned with the worst in man it is still possible to believe in a remedy, for man is not fundamentally malicious, only sinful. One of these definitely evil factors is the element of sadism or cruelty in all of us. It is part of man's fallen nature, and its force grows directly in proportion as men are frustrated, torn and tormented by their normal circumstances. This aspect of original sin, manifest also in the success of books depicting cruelty, newspapers recording crimes and so on, is a factor which in large measure makes war a possibility in spite of ideals, theories and goodwill. There is the unconscious rivalry between the generations which exercises pressure upon the elderly to make the younger do a bit of suffering. The hidden rivalry of the sexes

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plays its part, war being 'a costly device for restoring to men their pride and self-respect'—especially before women. These and some other elements in unredeemed human nature, while they unconsciously welcome it, do not themselves cause war.

Wars are caused by the pursuit of many valid satisfactions which are unattainable in peace-time because the social structure and its imponderable elements have a certain contradiction in them, and most of the satisfaction sought is a relief from intolerable frustrations. *Men are moved not so much by what they hope to get out of war, as by what they hope war will get them out of.* And these motives exist along with very genuine and serious desires for peace. That is the tragedy of war, and there is much guidance for dealing with it in the traditional Christian understanding of human nature, which has been so distressingly replaced in Christian leadership by a parade of moralizing international politics. There is of course ample material now for laying down the conditions of a just war as developed by Aquinas and the schoolmen and its modification by later theologians.¹

III SPIRITUAL DIAGNOSIS

But there is a prior problem upon which the Christian teaching can contribute much, namely the problem of preventing conditions arising in which war appears tragically as the lesser of two evils. In the first place, it can be laid down that peace is not an achievement into which man may painfully evolve from a presumed natural state of warlikeness; on the contrary it is part of the natural structure and essence of man's nature which is destroyed by the disruptive forces of sinful human living. The most penetrating secular anthropology and psychology to-day confirm this. Peace is something man has in him but has destroyed. It is to be recovered rather than manufactured. It is essential to base all peace work upon this assumption, implicit in all Christian theology, that sin is a fall and redemption a recovery. It is then necessary for the Church to undertake analogically a diagnostic understanding of the forces that

¹ See Epstein: *The Catholic Tradition of the Law of Nature*. F. Strammann: *The Church and War*. Gigon: *The Ethics of Peace and War*.

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disrupt peace, with the aid of her own doctrine of human nature. We have seen that war, and to-day more than ever, is an acute collective example of that 'divided will' which Saint Paul and Saint Augustine describe in terms of the single person. On this point too Abelard writes. 'The fact is that this kind of will, existing with much internal regret, is not, if I may say so, will but a passive submission of the mind. It is so because the man wills one thing on account of another. He puts up with *this*, because he really desires *that*'¹ 'The submission of the mind' to war is made not because it wants *this*, namely war, but because it wants *that*. *That* includes things like the prestige that claims loyalty from a nation's own people, the unifying effect of a common aim, economic opportunities and so on. It matters not that these objectives are seldom or permanently obtained by war, nor does it matter that the reasons given to justify aggression are never genuine and are always given in terms of cultural or moral purposes. The tragedy of war lies just in the belief of peoples that they can thereby obtain certain satisfactions or reliefs which are denied them under peace conditions, whether it be a decent livelihood, a sense of significance or the consciousness of doing something worth while. Modern wars are the activities of whole populations, not of paid armies, and the more recent they are the more they show signs of being efforts to break out from a disintegrating or cramping peace. Even in the days when war was a specialized activity theologians recognized this tragic nature of war. Saint Augustine says that men seek war to improve a defective peace: 'They that perturb the peace they live in, do it not for hate of it, but to show their power in alteration of it' (*De Civitate Dei*. Bk. XIX, 12). Most frequently, however, men are not moved to war by clear objectives of what they want in the way of a better peace, but in irrational desires to break up or get away from a peace that is galling to them. Aquinas, commenting on this book of Augustine, carried the argument of Christian insight still farther. He shows how, behind the break-up of concord which is strife, there lies a defective peace in which it is the conflicting purposes of the same men that lead to conflict be

¹ Ethics, ch. iii. McCullam's translation, p. 21.

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tween men. 'Concord, properly speaking, is between one man and another in so far as the will of various hearts agree together in consenting to the same thing. Now the heart of one man may happen to tend to diverse things and this in two ways. First, in respect of the diverse appetitive powers, thus the sensitive appetite tends sometimes to that which is opposed to the rational appetite, according to Gal. v. 17. 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit' Secondly, in so far as one and the same appetitive power tends to diverse objects of appetite, which it cannot obtain all at the same time; so that there must needs be a clashing of the movements of the appetite. Now the union of such movements is essential to peace, because man's heart is not at peace so long as he has not what he wants, or if having what he wants, there still remains something for him to want, and which he cannot have at the same time'. (*Summa Theol.* II, II Q. 29. a1) Saint Thomas does not work out the connection between the destruction of peace which is the conflict of purposes in the same men, and the destruction of concord which is strife between men. But we have in this whole treatment of Question 29, as well as in Book XIX of the *de Civitate Dei*, the foundation of any serious grappling with the tragedy of war.

The Christian contribution to peace begins therefore, not with ethical exhortation but with spiritual diagnosis, for the problem is that peoples are not in a position to respond to moral appeals. The causes of war lie much deeper than the will to war or absence of the will to peace. They lie to-day in the conflicts within nations that press them into rivalry in spite of the will to peace. And a fruitful peace policy consists in dealing first with those conflicts that represent the crossed purposes of each people. As with persons so with nations, men always endeavour to solve an internal conflict by external means, changing their relations with other men and groups. The others, however, do not allow themselves to be used as conveniences in this way. And war is just the attempt on the part of some peoples to make others do their will. So a Christian message of peace will be based upon the understanding of man's nature which Christians should have learnt in their acknowledgement of the need for redemption of the individual. 'The powers of life, whether of a man or a people, need integra-

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tion into a whole before either can approach the condition in which it can act as a moral personality.

IV. THE ECONOMIC MIASMA

Nationalism in the aggressive meaning of the term is not the cause of war, but the result of it. This should be insisted upon in any Christian attack on the problem, for Christians need never be so foolish as to suppose that the criterion of war is bloodshed, or that the existence of national states is inherently a provocation to war, any more than the existence of separate persons is the cause of quarrels.

So while the fact of sovereign states is in no way the cause of war, the fact of war makes the national unit also the belligerent unit. This fact of national sovereignty in the social system itself, if it were suppressed in the international sphere, as it is with relative success in the national one, would simply mean that Europe or the Empire or the World would now be the scene of an overt internal war instead of the present international rivalry. For the reason that war is in the structure of the society by which modern nations live, whether it breaks out as military conflict or not, the idea of collective security is not likely to be effective. It could only be effective if war were the accidental instead of the essential feature of nations' economic existence in the modern world. So Collective Security too presupposes the solution of the war situation and cannot therefore be a remedy for it.

This argument is not to decry the conception of a law of nations; it is to urge that such a conception can only become practical when nations are different kinds of entities than they now are. It is the nature of the social life within the nations that determines their relations to one another. We shall have to look more closely at the structure of our social life. But first, let it be remembered that the Church need not be speechless on the peace issue because the legal solution has broken down. She should not be dumbfounded or share the 'humiliation of impotence' of the world because of the failure of a coercive legalist machinery that no nation dare operate. It will be calamitous and faithless if the Church is reduced to accepting

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as the sole object of its spiritual resources for peace that legal solution which the Christian gospel came specifically to transcend in the personal sphere. In that case the word of the Church will continue to be merely a blessing of good but ineffective political ideas, whereas the problem is that good politics remain in the sphere of ideas and bad politics monopolize the field of actualities. What is wanted is divining the sources of power that can be put behind the good political ideas of the world so that they become actual and effective. If the Church is to offer that divination out of that deeper knowledge of man than politics by itself can ever have, then the Christian word must be a word of deliverance where unhappily there has only been a word of exhortation.

We have to discover just why there is war, especially at a time when there is a widespread and deliberate aversion to it. What makes people embark upon enterprises they do not fundamentally want? What is the nature of the miasma flowing from our common life that makes for this war that causes national life to be an aggressive unit. Bishop Stubbs distinguished between wars of modern States which are wars for 'interests' and the fightings of medieval princes which were wars for 'rights'. And Bergson makes a similar distinction when he speaks of '*guerres accidentales*' and '*guerres essentielles*'. 'De ces dernières sont les guerres d'aujourd'hui. On cherche de moins en moins à conquérir pour conquérir. On ne se bat plus par amour-propre blessé, pour le prestige, pour la gloire. On se bat pour n'être pas affamé, dit-on. en réalité pour se maintenir à un certain niveau de vie au-dessous duquel on croit qu'il ne vaudrait plus la peine de vivre.'¹

Bergson is right in seeing economic war as the root of modern nationalist wars, but there is a suggestion in his words that economic motives are conscious, that peoples go to war in pursuit of deliberate economic objective. This is only partly true. Much more important is the irrational urge to break through frustrations that are imposed by the economic failures of peace. Karl Jung the eminent psychologist wrote 'From this catastrophe (the Great War), humanity may possibly draw the conclusion that only one side of fate can be mastered by rational

¹ *Les Deux Sources de la Morale et de la Religion*, chapitre iv, p. 309

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intentions.' In other words, war is a largely unconscious effort to get away from something, rather than to get something, but like all unconscious processes it has a logic of its own and we find that war does give people the kind of relief that any break out often gives. 'Now I feel better,' said Bismarck when he had smashed a precious vase in the royal palace. Modern wars are economic wars, not in the sense that they begin with conscious economic objectives, but in that peoples are driven by physical, cultural and psychic disturbance in an unnatural economic era to certain courses which are partly an internal relief and partly a provocation to other peoples. 'La dernière guerre', summarises Bergson, 'avec celle qu'on entrevoit pour l'avenir si par malheur nous devons avoir encore des guerres, est liée au caractère industriel de notre civilisation.' Bergson cannot be accused of a materialist interpretation of human facts, nor does the elucidation of war in terms of economic rivalry imply it. For one thing, it is not to say that man is universally moved by economic motives. Rather it is that this civilization being particularly one of economic complexity is more determined by economic considerations. And these draw attention to themselves in exact proportion as the economic basis of society works badly, very much as a dyspeptic sees life in terms of the stomach. And further, to stress the economic basis of modern war is not a materialistic interpretation, because the economic deadlock rests as much upon a perverted idealism and moralism as upon its physical elements. But even if the material factors were the weightiest, Christians could sooner come to an understanding with Marxism and its materialist interpretations than with rational idealism that sees men's actions in terms of theories, ideas, conscious aims and calculations. Men are not, as is often said, 'incurably romantic'. They are, as Christians should know, 'incurably self-deceptive' except when grace has touched them. And they will always be giving romantic reasons for conduct that springs from irrational, lowly, interested and even sordid motives.

It is something in our modern industrial and commercial civilization that makes wars for 'interests', or 'guerres essentielles', in place of wars for 'rights' or 'guerres accidentelles'. These latter were the efforts of fairly self-reliant peoples who

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wanted a bit more, either of treasure, territory, men, glory, prestige, something to look after, enterprise, adventure, and so on. The modern wars for 'interests' are the efforts of peoples who under circumstances of economic structure, cannot exist at all or at the level they have come to expect, except at the expense of other peoples, or except by the reliefs tragically provided by war in the form of employment, activity, exaltation, social solidarity, and so forth. War arrives when the two necessities reach a certain point of intensity together, namely, the pursuit of advantage over others and a break out from social frustration due largely to economic contradictions at home.

The key to the tragic situation of a period marked by great peace activities and glaring preparation for war must lie in the aggressive nature of a human activity which is mistakenly regarded as pacific. It is not difficult to see that the insistent competition to sell without a corresponding competition to buy is at the root of an economic rivalry in which not only do some overreach others but succeed only by making others fail. It is not merely increased prosperity but survival that is at issue. It is a grim struggle for one of the conditions of livelihood. It is not for goods, except to a minor extent. It is for employment as a condition of income. The roots of this rivalry are within each nation, but it manages to dodge the worst effects by working for the foreigner. But an outside world ready to take goods to a greater extent than it sells, eventually develops the same need to export its unemployment problem. The world has recently been the field of a scramble to export as much and to import as little as possible. In pre-industrial days men fought to get something it was easier to take than to make; now they fight because it is easier to make than to take. For society gives them income for the amount of their employment or trouble. Each seeks to give goods and to take work from the others. Milk poured down the drain at home, machinery exported on credit or on investment that is lost, shells bursting on a foreign soil, are all processes of an economic insanity that seeks maximum employment with minimum return. And it is the most tragic aspect of modern war that it fulfils most perfectly the first condition required to brace up

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the industrial system of to-day, namely a rapid destruction of the results of production. It has been cruelly and truly said. 'Only in that bloody market are there no tariff barriers, but only prompt payment in kind. Once a modern economy attains its logical end in this supreme sabotage, things appear to go better, prisons are emptied, suicides diminish, unemployment vanishes and everyone is, if not happy, at least interested or excited.'¹

These are of course not deliberate results. They follow logically from a condition of modern society which makes income depend upon employment and employment upon export. On this second relation, Mr. Keynes writes:

'War has several causes. Dictators and others such, to whom war offers, in expectation at least, a pleasurable excitement, find it easy to work on the natural bellicosity of their peoples. But, over and above this, facilitating their task of fanning the popular flame, are the economic causes of war, namely the pressure of population and the competitive struggle for markets. It is the second factor, which probably played a predominant part in the nineteenth century, and might again, that is germane to this discussion.

'I have pointed out in the preceding chapter that, under the system of domestic *laissez-faire* and an international gold standard such as was orthodox in the latter half of the nineteenth century, there was no means open to a government whereby to mitigate economic distress at home except through the competitive struggle for markets. For all measures helpful to a state of chronic or intermittent under-employment were ruled out, except measures to improve the balance of trade on income account.

'Thus, whilst economists were accustomed to applaud the prevailing international system as furnishing the fruits of the international division of labour and harmonizing at the same time the interests of different nations, there lay concealed a less benign influence; and those statesmen were moved by common sense and a correct apprehension of the true course of events, who believed that if a rich, old country were to neglect the struggle for markets, its prosperity would droop and fail. But

¹ *The Politics of Peace*, by Gens. New English Weekly, 23rd April 1936

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if nations can learn to provide themselves with full employment by their domestic policy (and, we must add if they can also attain equilibrium in the trend of their population), there need be no important economic forces calculated to set the interest of one country against that of its neighbours. There would still be room for the international division of labour and for international lending in appropriate conditions. But there would be no longer a pressing motive why one country need force its wares on another or repulse the offerings of its neighbour, not because this was necessary to enable it to pay for what it wished to purchase, but with the express object of upsetting the equilibrium of payments so as to develop a balance of trade in its own favour. International trade would cease to be what it is, namely a desperate expedient to maintain employment at home by forcing sales on foreign markets and restricting purchases, which, if successful, will merely shift the problem of unemployment to the neighbour which is worsted in the struggle, but a willing and unimpeded exchange of goods and services in conditions of mutual advantage.¹

This apt quotation puts it clearly that a modern industrial community still requires, in order to earn the means of living, a volume of employment greater than the volume of employment required in producing the things it lives on. A balance of trade means that the nation who has it, works for the foreigner more than the foreigner works for it. In other words, nations fight for each other's work, not for their goods, because the income of their populations depends upon their activity, not upon the goods available. And as scientific technique makes labour much more productive while the population is unable to buy all its own production, the foreigner is more insistently expected to take it. Under such conditions every economy must be an expanding economy. When this expansion is compulsorily effected, that is war. But the essence of the matter is simply that if a certain number of people are unable to buy the buns made in existing land, mills, ovens, except on condition that they can more money by building more ovens, then the point arrives when a nation can only purchase its production plus the imports exchanged for part of it, if it exports more

¹ *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (Macmillan), p. 381

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ovens than are the equivalent of its imports. The reason why reciprocal interchange of goods and services between nations is impossible to-day is that no nation is financially self-dependent, that is, able to distribute its goods by the incomes earned in producing them. More work is a condition of more income; therefore the foreigner is requested to provide it with more work than it gives. The character of industrial economy is the chronic provocation to war just because that economy has never squarely faced the fact that scientific technique makes it necessary to adapt income not to activity, but to goods. The familiar situation of 'poverty in plenty' is the same problem as that of a world preparing for a war nobody wants. Malnutrition, deprivation, restriction at home while goods are being thrown away, is the internal side of the same problem as forcing goods on the foreigner and taking his reluctantly. Restriction on international trade like tariffs, preferences, and quotas are not the cause of the problem, but political efforts of a nation to keep the problem out of its own borders.

An examination of the demand for colonies and the pressure for territorial expansion shows that this is the root problem. With the possible exceptions of Japan and Italy no country is overpopulated in the sense of having more people than it can support at the standard of living it wants. But even where there is a real problem of density it is because emigration is restricted. Emigration is difficult because the lands to which men might emigrate have the same problem of economic expansion. A former high commissioner said: 'Australia's capacity to absorb settlers is in direct proportion to her ability to find foreign markets for her products.' Every emigrant becomes a competitor with his home country in the world scramble to sell more than to buy. But in the case of most countries the problem is more direct. Before her rearmament, Germany had more people than she could employ. Employment, not subsistence, is the requirement. For Germany, territorial expansion was a very hopeful way of solving its 'unemployment overpopulation problem'.

It has now been established that those countries who cannot get the raw material they require are unable to do so, not because they have not colonies but because they cannot pay

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for the material ¹ Access to new territory would not help, unless it became a controlled and protected area. A country cannot pay for its desired imports because the others have trade barriers, and she could only pay for them in her own acquired territory, if she were putting up barriers herself there 'It is not emigration, it is not difficulties about raw materials, it is really a difficulty about markets which makes populations surplus populations. There is no such thing as a surplus population anywhere in the world, except one that is relative to and caused by the existing commercial and economic order' (Sir Arthur Salter)

It is the absence of an economic mechanism for reciprocal trade in goods and services that prevents satisfaction of the claims of dissatisfied nations. Reciprocal trade implies that each nation can buy its own consumable production, and therefore distribute to its own people that part it keeps plus the equivalent from abroad of that part it exports. What makes this impossible is the same cause that impels organized destruction of foodstuffs and goods, governments not only encouraging such measures but penalizing those who produce too much. It is insufficient home income; income is insufficient because it is tied to employment. Under such conditions people will fight for more of the work that gives them paper claims on goods, while goods are being poured down the sink. The first condition of removing the tension which puts national interests in conflict with one another is a recognition that employment shall no longer be tied to export not matched by imports—that is just waste of effort. Some tendencies in reversing this vicious assumption under the idea of economic self-dependence are clearly in the right direction, and in that sense 'economic nationalism' is a force for peace while much economic internationalism is a provocation to war. But this condition cannot be properly fulfilled until income is dissociated from employment, and made to reflect a nation's production instead of its effort. International politics could then become true questions

¹ E.g. in *The Demand for Colonies*, League of Nations Union, 6d. Sir Arthur Salter. *Peace and the Colonial Problem, Raw Materials and Colonies*. The Royal Institute of International Affairs

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of the relationship between states instead of rationalized impulses to escape from internal economic dilemmas

V. THE FAILURE OF PEACE

Christians have the responsibility of recognizing concrete factors in human politics. The Christian religion is historical, attaching significance to concrete events, and not exclusively to ideals and theories. God moves in the world through historical happenings as well as through the aims and thoughts of men. This divine action in history has the nature of judgment. This is often a condemning judgment, as when one evil is chastised by another in the form of an inevitable consequence or reaction. To recognize this is the basis of Christian hope as distinct from facile optimism. From their readiness to face the worst in man and nevertheless to maintain hope, Christians should be ready to detect, behind apparent national and racial ideas and myths, forces of a very commonplace, self-interested and often sordid nature. And especially should a Christian understanding of man and the tricks of his soul lead to a discernment of the self-deception which lurks in the habits of political, economic and national movements disguising themselves in the '*imponderabilia*' of national honour, historic missions, honest finance and so on.

Failure to use this discernment has led Christians to be no wiser than the world in taking at their face value the deliberately expressed attitudes of peoples to one another. In consequence they have attempted to encourage the cure of a 'nationalist' mythology, by an 'internationalism' which is no less a mythology. The term 'Internationalism' has become a modern 'Abracadabra', like the term 'Evolution' thirty years ago which came to the lips of a man when he had reached the limits of his intelligence on any subject. 'This is an international problem' means too often 'I don't understand it, and anyway we can't do anything about it here.' A problem that no one can begin to solve until everybody else does the same is truly a 'hopeless' problem. It is necessary to distinguish two entirely different kinds of 'international' problem. The first kind is common, universal, existing in many places. It sets the parties

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at loggerheads with one another like six men each with a stomach-ache becoming irritable with the others for not making his life easier. The second kind is collective in the sense of its lying in the deliberate attitude of groups and nations to one another. The first is common in its origin and collective in its results, the second is collective in its origin and frequently common in its results. The actual world problem to-day is of the first kind, and all efforts to solve it on the assumption that it is of the second is to make a mythology of internationalism. To see it as a common problem, rather than as an international one, is the one truly hopeful attitude, for it means that a solution can begin 'somewhere'.

We have now to see that the war problem is not, as it were, an added difficulty superimposed on top of the social and economic problems of the nations, and is certainly not the cause of them. On the contrary it is created by the unconscious attempt of peoples to escape from the failures of peace. Those failures are not, as in the past, imperfections, which nations might hope to remedy by acquisition. They are contradictions and dilemmas inherent in the social disorder of modern society, and this disorder is closely related to the secularization of modern life. Owing to the unnaturalness of social living in a secularized era, war has become no longer an enterprise, but an urge to fulfil valid satisfactions that peace conditions do not fulfil. These satisfactions may be grouped under three headings.

1. *The Economic Factors* described above are not the only ones, but they are the most aggravating in an epoch which interprets all progress in economic terms. There is no need to pretend that all wars are economic in their origin. But the present international deadlock is one in which the economic malady of secularist civilization is arousing psychic predispositions to war, and arousing them in opposition to very deliberate desires for peace. It has been shown that nations cannot exchange reciprocally because they now cannot distribute fully internally. This internal inability is due to a disorder in the relations of money, work, production and consumption, a disorder which could be traced to the development of organized activities in a secularized society with no embodied conception of the pur-

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pose of life. Here it must suffice to indicate some more general features of this disorder which pushes towards war.

It is an amazing fact, which ought to have raised profound questionings, that nations achieve a prosperity unknown in peace-time when preparing munitions of war that do not enter into the commercial market. Recently two members of parliament pleaded in the House of Commons that if Woolwich Arsenal were to be moved it might be set up in their respective constituencies for the sake of the work it would give. The British Government has found that the more unsuccessful were its efforts to promote disarmament the more satisfactory became the country's economic condition. Sir Samuel Hoare offered the National Union of Manufacturers, as a Christmas message of hope in 1936, the promise that armament industries were being organized to supply the world when Britain had completed her own preparations. German munitions were said to have been sold to Russia. M. Blum declared (January 1937). 'The manufacture of arms to-day takes such an important place in national industries that it would probably be impossible merely to order a stoppage of arms manufacture without exposing oneself to grave internal crisis.' Mussolini, as reported by Pertinax, said to the French Ambassador: 'Even if you were to hand me Abyssinia on a silver plate, I should not accept it: for I am resolved to take it by force.' These facts and statements all say one thing, namely, that modern communities cannot distribute the wealth produced by them and partly exchanged with that of the foreigner, except by the distribution of incomes through non-productive enterprises. In a natural economy where incomes reflected production the call to make arms would be an obvious tax upon the productive resources and therefore upon the consumption of the community. Where war preparation means better livelihood than peace production, it is the wickedness of peace rather than of war that strikes the realist mind. While in certain restricted areas it certainly may be a choice between producing 'butter or guns', in the large states generally it is much more certainly the case that unless we make guns we cannot buy butter which is produced by the remaining resources so plentifully that its raw material is being daily wasted and curtailed. So artificial economic

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deprivation, due to no productive defect but only to inability to earn money for the things wasted has a direct effect in producing warfare and stimulating facilities of war for the sake of work and income.

2. *In the Political Sphere* these factors are at work more indirectly but with results more obvious. The anachronism of national impoverishment is one of the main influences in provoking those aggressive nationalisms and militant class theories which are the most ostensible dangers to peace to-day. Countries most obviously the field of a mythical and aggressive nationalism are those who have succeeded least in the scramble for economic security. The standards of living in Japan and Italy have been very low for a long time. In Spain economic impoverishment provoked revolution on a class basis and its inevitable class reaction. Germany is the nation most seriously involved in a policy endangering the peace. Her political and commercial creditors, all with a radical disorder in the means and ends of economic life, insisted upon German payments being made by every device except the only one by which the payee could in fact make them, namely by delivery of goods. To escape from impossible debts, internal and external, her currency was destroyed and this gave the opportunity to the same international financial system that was running her to set going vast amounts of American and British investments in Germany, beginning with the international Dawes loan, until in 1928 the limits of lucrative foreign investment had been reached. With this incredible foreign indebtedness on top of reparation dues it became more impossible for Germany to buy through national reciprocal trade the products she needed from abroad. But it should be noted that it was mainly, as it is still, the *internal disorder of creditor countries rather than of the debtors that makes international payments difficult*.

The National Socialist Revolution was partly a hysterical mass refusal to be any longer the *corpus vile* for international commercial rapacity. In the commercial arena where she felt acute inferiority the sense of national significance was frustrated. The elements of popular consciousness were therefore shifted from economics to politics and race. Upon Reich and Race a new sense of being alive for something was built, while

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behind the smokescreen of nationalist propaganda the large industrial interests submitted to control by the State. There are then three main elements that make Germany the most glaring source of a war explosion. First, a strong political and racial idolatry, reviving as a compensation for economic misery, and demanding political responsibilities on a par with those of other powers. Hence the ache for colonies which will also provide many jobs for governors, defensive armies, administrators and civil servants. There is a marked difference between Herr Hitler's realization in *Mein Kampf* that colonies are an economic liability and his later demands for them on 'economic' grounds. Second, there is in Germany a policy of economic recovery which, suffering from the same contradiction between the policy of finance and industry as the rest of the world, has to be an expanding economy. Hence Germany's finger in Spain, her eyes upon North Africa and Czechoslovakia as fields for control, and a good big hate against Bolshevism to give these 'vital interests' a moral and spiritual complexion. Third, the loss of an emotional life founded on a rational environment and natural work, which leaves the mass of people without any real emotional interest and a swollen, exaggerated patriotism as the cheapest substitute. From this condition it is not far to the deception that war is a good in itself, the only bulwark against degeneration, and other militarist slogans that canalize popular emotions (see General Ludendorff: *The Nation at War*, and Major F. Yeats-Brown: *The Dogs of War*).

The German situation is only the most acute example of the widespread thwarting of self-expression along normal civilized lines, from which all nations suffer to varying degrees. Everywhere there is the effort to recover a political purpose for the State as a remedy for the diffused restiveness against a civilization built so largely upon contractual, commercial and bargaining relationships.¹ In a period of economic contradictions

¹ Cf. Nietzsche's insight half a century ago. 'I cannot help seeing in the prevailing international movements of the present day, and the simultaneous promulgation of universal suffrage, the effects of the *fear of war* above everything else, yea, I behold behind these movements those truly international homeless money-hermits as the really alarmed, who, with their natural lack of the State-instinct, have

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and disintegration a strong nationalist ideal recovers some sense of status for the population. And so long as the internal life of the nation is disordered a unifying political purpose is most easily created by external expansion and military enterprise. 'War is politics *κατ' ἐξοχήν*,' wrote Treitschke. 'War is the continuation of politics by other means,' wrote von Clausewitz. These are dicta of believers in war as a good. But the same truth was detected by 'I' H. Green, 'War is the attribute of the imperfect State.' So long as political purposes cannot be evoked in terms of positive social aims owing to conflicting elements in the structure of society, so long will political purposes and enthusiasm have to be generated by external fears, hates and hopes.

3. *The psychic satisfactions* provided by warfare as compared with many forms of peace constitute a further element in the tragedy of war. Peace movements without and within the Christian Churches have not faced this factor with the seriousness it demands, and by this negligence Christian pacifism and internationalism have been false to the Christian claim to redeem human nature in its totality. When war is more 'interesting' than peace, merely to encourage the suppression of war without ensuring that the psychic needs it meets can be satisfied in a more 'interesting' peace, is to accentuate an interior conflict in human beings that will merely transfer the war situation to some more domestic sphere than the international. It is to expect a moral regeneration in an abstract section of the person, and this is just the impossibility which Christian redemption recognizes and overcomes.

It is a peculiar tragic element in the war situation of the present moment that along with a growing revulsion from war

learnt to abuse politics as a means of the Exchange, and State and Society as an apparatus for their own enrichment. Against the deviation of the State-tendency into a money tendency, to be feared from this side, the only remedy is war and once again war. . . . If I conceive of the enormous dissemination of liberal optimism as the result of modern financial affairs fallen into strange hands, and if I imagine all evils of social conditions together with the necessary decay of the arts to have either germinated from that root or grown together with it, one will have to pardon my occasionally chanting a paean on war.'

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as it more and more affects whole populations with deadlier destructiveness, there is a historically unique flatness, *ennui* and *malaise* in the peace conditions of a decaying commercialist culture that sends men to the military and political sides of a war 'situation' as providing a heightened sense of being alive. It has often been observed that the destructive and creative impulses in man are closely allied, and are truly to be contrasted not with each other, but contrasted, together, with the merely preservative, conservative attitude which is content merely to 'hang on' supinely to stable elements in society which are hoped to 'last my time'.¹ Therefore when society is so unnatural and perverted in the order of its activities that under peace conditions the impulse to create what is worthwhile is frustrated, then men are impelled towards militant ideals as the only alternative to death by inanition. These two deadly alternatives are before Europe to-day. In one set of communities, with their totalitarian states and demonic creeds 'the death urge' takes the form of a pseudo-heroism of self-destruction under the conscious desire for social rehabilitation by military exploits. In the relatively democratic states of liberal Capitalism no one really believes in the future of that system, not even its beneficiaries. In a passive, self-seeking and individualist way the people hope it will last their time, but the deepest and most genuine feeling is *après moi le déluge*. This attitude will enable people to go on only so long as nothing fundamental happens. The mass of people may regard their social order as a lesser evil than that of the militant dictatorships, but it has no spirit that works for the future. It cannot arouse energies that can re-create a community, such as the totalitarian states do in a very dangerous way, and men will then easily fall a victim to the superior and blind energies of their opponents unless they take upon themselves a socially creative mission.

Such a mission, *if it is* to rescue us from war destruction, will have not only to offer opportunities for those who now have no function in society, or only a trivial job; it will also have to

¹ Cf E. Glover: *War, Sadism and Pacifism*. 'A large part of the energy that drives a peace organization has precisely the same source as the energy that lets loose war.'

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engender a movement for social reconstruction of such a compelling nature that the talents now used in military affairs will be evoked for useful and hopeful purposes.

The technician's skill is now employed in war equipment on such a scale that its satisfying absorption into normal peace occupations is impossible so long as economic and scientific activities are hindered by purely financial reasons. The technician's ability, which demands expression in some real task, is a powerful factor in holding on to warfare when peace fails to provide it. 'You had a war, Daddy; why should not I have one,' was said by a young airman to his father. This technician's impulse cannot be confined to perfecting instruments of war and their management merely as a safeguard in case they may be wanted. Human nature will not stand it and will want to express its skill with its instruments in the war for which they are designed. And considering not only the extent of unemployment, but also the number of fatuous and unreal jobs in shops, offices and bureaucratic establishments, along with the enervating effects of hypertrophied urbanization, the alternative offered to civilized man is often one between warfare or meaningless existence.

War and preparedness for it are so much of an institution, an integral part of the structure of civilized life, that to expect its abolition without a radical transformation of the configuration of society in peace, is fantastically to attribute to the human being the absolute freedom of the angels. Besides demanding technical and organizational skill, the war institution also fills certain voids made wider by modern rationalistic and democratic flatness by its administrative hierarchy, its elaborate rituals and its codes of etiquette and behaviour. The preparation for war, the pageantry, the organization and other 'imponderable' elements that enter into the military atmosphere are a great breath of life in a world corrupted by the squalor of frustrated economic relationships. And the political objects apart, the military world is one of the few refuges of status for ordinary men in a civilization otherwise almost purely contractual and bargaining. The art of war is one of the few robust survivals of the rapidly disappearing 'professions'. And it does induce a relative sense of responsibility for society, while peace-

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time service in the industrialist era has largely induced the motive of scrambling for survival and security. Peace itself cannot be given a romantic appeal; the activities offered by peace ideals are too cerebral to make them compel the allegiance of ordinary men. Moreover, the pursuit of militant objectives offers a contrast to the mediocrity and meaninglessness of everyday existence, with its habitual action in work and recreation—a contrast which reaches its greatest intensity in the period of decaying industrialism. In spite of its evils war provides a super-individual aim for men, a sense of partaking in a communal enterprise, a heightened consciousness of being alive, gifts which peace conditions deny to so many. When war can appear as stimulating the soul, while the state of peace is felt to atrophy it, radical peace effort consists in finding for peace conditions, not only what William James called 'the moral equivalent of war', but also its economic, social and psychic equivalent.

VI CHRISTIAN RESOURCES

The full resources of the Christian religion in its impact upon society are used only when the Church draws upon them for a double task. The first is to proclaim the universal Christian standards of conduct as the truly human ones and to diagnose the condition of society in the light of Christian knowledge of man. The second is to discern the finger of God in what is unique and decisive in each historical moment and to offer power to man to act rightly in that moment. The Christian significance of the present war situation is not reached when it is interpreted merely in terms of principles and violations of them that are part of the propensities of man throughout the period of human history when war has been a recurrent phenomenon. In every situation there are elements that belong to human nature at all times, but the relationship of these factors to one another and their results in the objective world are affected by the unique, unprecedented and unrepeatable constellation of historical facts at the time. The full impact of the Christian mind upon the world is made when, in addition to announcing permanent truths, it exercises that prophecy which

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consists in tracing the hand of God in the actual moment of history.

The objectively unique features of the actual situation, as it affects the Christian handling of the problem, have been dealt with above and may be briefly summarized as follows:

There is the fact that modern forms of warfare have alienated much of the emotional and moral support that warfare could enlist in the past, and have created an ambivalent emotional attitude towards it. This produces a peculiarly tragic situation. Emotional revulsion to war grows *pari passu* with emotional discomfort in peace. Actual hostilities show increasing signs of requiring artificial and hysterical forms of justification. The rights and wrongs of particular acts of warfare leap less and less immediately to the unsophisticated consciousness of men. There is a reality in the objection that much of what could be said for 'taking the sword' as an instrument of justice becomes unreal in modern conditions of mass massacre. The distinction between offensive and defensive wars grows daily more incapable of definition. The existence of the bombing aeroplane has probably been the greatest factor in preventing hostilities between the large States in a genuinely international contest during the last six years.

In the opposition to these forces are the facts enumerated in the previous section of this paper. In spite of the growth of moral and emotional hostility to warfare on an unprecedented scale, the failure of organized social living to meet the natural needs of men makes warfare an imminent possibility. This possibility derives to-day not from the conflicts in man which are always present in him, but from certain conflicts in the structure of society that belong to the modern period alone. Conflicts of will and interest there have always been, and will be. The peculiar nature of present-day social conflicts lies behind the ostensible clashes of self-will and self-interest in persons and groups. It is an incompatibility between the objectives of organized social activities themselves, and this is independent of the egoism or altruism of those who operate within these spheres. In fact, if an organized activity, like industry or government, is not carried on for the true purpose of that activity, then the better and more conscientious the agents in it, the worse

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will be the social dilemmas that result. The true purpose of a human activity is that one in which it furthers the purpose of human life as a whole. Where a financial result takes priority over an economic result, where industry exists for work instead of vice versa, where politics become engrossed in rescue work for collapsing economics instead of defining social policy, where the family is treated as a social investment or liability, where art has to prostitute itself in order to flag the energies of a self-contradictory commercialism—in all such cases the 'right' order of human activities is inverted. The 'right' order of human activities is one in which those that are in their essential function more instrumental, and farther removed from the totality of human purpose, shall minister to those which are above them in the functional scale. There has been no earlier period in which this order is so flagrantly denied as it is to-day. Behind the question whether men are good or bad in their occupation is the question of the purpose of that occupation itself. Whether, for instance, a producer of goods is a soulless profiteer or a socially minded person, is to-day secondary to the question of what production is for in the present scheme of things. And this question is one that can now only receive a confusion of answers. There is no generally recognized scheme of life which could give a recognized purpose for any department of it.

The gigantic confusion of social purposes in the modern era has bred not only conflict but contradiction, and in this contradiction not only does man feel social pain (for that would not make it a unique situation) but a frustration of both the will and the intelligence. Social ills are not new, and the problem of social evil is part of the heritage of man in the world. But whereas it can take a challenging and stimulating form, to-day it has essentially a depressing and numbing effect—except where unnatural relief from frustration is sought and found in the practical results and atmosphere of a war situation.

In this unique condition the resources of the Christian Faith have an outstanding opportunity. In the first place Christians can derive a real though humbling encouragement from the knowledge that this conflict of social purposes has become acute in proportion as life has become secularized. While public life

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ceased to be guided by convictions of the spiritual and supra-temporal nature and purpose of man, the elements of secular order have not remained confidently and successfully secular, unhampered by supra-mundane complications. They have ceased to be true to their own secular function. The natural social order minus supernatural truth has become unnatural. It is this unnaturalness of present-day secular existence that causes the economic, social and psychic dilemmas which drive peoples into militant attitudes. The social problem is therefore intimately related to the central religious problem of our time.

The situation is the climax of the secularization of life. The banishment of religion from a position in which it is the key of life, either by segregating the spiritual from the natural and social aspects of existence or by obliterating the tension between them, making religion a mere function of social aims, produces a contradiction in social life itself. After efforts to heal the contradiction by attempts to interpret human life in terms of one of its functions, such as the economic man, the State, the Race or some other biological element, society is in a strict sense in a state of crisis. This means more than the existence of evils and pain; it means a situation in which humanity is driven by its own internal conflicts into external relations which it would hate as a deliberate choice and accepts only as relief. The spiritual and economic aspects of this crisis are closely parallel. Physically we have a vast surplus of productive energy owing to the achievements of applied science. Spiritually we dare not accept that gift, and therefore do not demand the simple social and economic arrangements that would place it at our disposal. Physically man's debt to nature for livelihood and culture has been reduced colossally by the use of natural instead of human energy. Society is doing its best to counteract this gift by an increase in unproductive tasks—redundant jobs, useless and uglifying public works, more activity for each result, and most successful of all—war equipment that is out of date as soon as ready if not destroyed in hostilities. And, financially, all this is registered as a growing mountain of debt. We could live on easy terms with nature; we choose to live hardly, and in strict logic we choose to die. The money-lenders thrive on this spiritual and social masochism, and are faced with the prob-

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lem of increasing the demand for borrowing while preventing the ultimate result of the only method now open on a large scale, the destruction of credit-worthy communities. So while they are internationalists and would rather have world peace and co-operation, the scale on which their unnecessary service is now required is part of the internal contradiction in the life of nations, which compels them to spend their substance in waste and destruction.

We do not now build pyramids for our kings or cathedrals for our gods with the surplus productive resources that are so much more plentiful for us than they were for Egypt or medieval Europe. These would not be exhaustive enough. We cannot even waste enough energy in our hypertrophied industrial and commercial processes. So we make armaments on a highly expensive scale. Their obsolescence is so rapid that the fear of losing a race in bankruptcy in the event of hostilities is holding governments in a galling check against war-making. International political attitudes are not the cause of this waste; they are the moral rationalizations of its meaninglessness. The enormous source of human energy freed from the necessity of providing the physical means of life are now used up in providing the physical means of death.

There is, then, deep down in this situation a pseudo-moralistic attitude which is in opposition to a truly religious outlook. Instead of faith in the power of God to offer gifts and to save men in any situation, instead of conviction that religion will always provide men with tasks that call forth the exercise of moral and spiritual responsibility, we of this generation prefer to save ourselves, as we think, by artificially twisting the actual economic and social situation so that the ways in which man has for ages used his moral and spiritual efforts in society will be maintained. We dare not allow the yoke of economic effort and the social limits it has imposed to be lightened, as the physical basis of our age requires. The result would be that human responsibility would be turned to the more spontaneously personal field and that of spiritual achievement, as the sphere of its exercise. The demonic pseudo-heroism of the modern soul finds its artificially magnified effort to live at all an *alibi* for shirking the problems of its personal and spiritual

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being, for dealing with which three centuries of secularization have weakened it. It culminates in a war situation which provides splendid opportunity for further moralist gymnastics in pacifist and political efforts to counteract its effects. We are ready to insist upon living hard, or even to die and to kill, and to protest against it all, in order to dispense with the Grace of God.

All this means that world peace is so easy to achieve. We fail because it is so easy. It is so difficult to us of the modern secularized world because it is so easy. Man is a spiritual being and requires moral and spiritual responsibility. Unless therefore he believes in God and is ready to trust that he will in any situation be shown how to exercise it, he will try to re-make conditions in which he has found his pride of life. But salvation by works without faith is death.

There is no solution of the war problem; there is only a solution of the problem of social living. The modern world is trembling on the brink of peace and security. Collective productive skill has brought forth more than enough for all--and for most to be generous. Modern wars are fought not to get something that is vital and cannot be obtained otherwise; they are prepared for and fought in order that men may retain the difficulties they are used to handling and obtain the economic rewards society only gives them on that condition; as well as the social and psychic satisfactions achieved in so doing. Peace is round the corner, but we want to go round the world for it.

Mankind to-day needs deliverance from the fear of peace. That deliverance requires such a re-ordering of social living within the national community as will earn the material security modern science has put into its hand. That security is refused for lack of religious faith. Peace and prosperity are now incompatible in the unnatural order of this secularized world. The word of deliverance from this dilemma is that the desire for both peace and prosperity can be achieved together. It can be uttered by the Church in terms of the spiritual purpose of man, which, when used to re-order the conflicting activities of society to that end, can restore society to its natural condition. That will not be a perfect or utopian world

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but one freed from its most baffling structural conflicts, and therefore one in which the problems of man will be within the sphere of the moral and social will.

There is a large hope of peace in the present situation, just because, as this paper has laboured to show, external problems of nations are the result of efforts to solve their internal ones in a delusive way. The political and economic aspects of those problems are sociological extensions of the spiritual one described by Saint James: 'Whence come wars and whence come fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not; ye kill and covet and cannot obtain; ye fight and war: ye have not because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss. . . .' Strife between nations as between persons is the end-product of internal disorders. Because the conflicts within the communities of our civilization are unnatural ones, due to no physical limitation which man has to break down or give in to with renunciation, the hope of peace is real and practical. Its fulfilment requires no fully regenerate race of men: only a readiness to accept what is offered in this age.

The tragedy of war and the hope of peace lie very near to one another, on opposite sides of a knife-edge. On which side the world will fall may well depend upon even the apparently feeble breath of the Christian Church. But in fact it is not so feeble, for the forces in the situation itself are those which the Christian mind alone has been formed to understand. It is, however, vitally necessary that the voice of the Church be sounded with the note of deliverance which this paper has tried to indicate. Peoples are not being 'drawn into' war; they may be driven to it as a means of bursting through frustrations that pervert the peaceful living of an unnatural society. The Church must avoid, above all, being content merely to forbid the results in external relations of these internal conflicts. A pacifism that touches the war situation only when hostilities are imminent, a collective war against a breaker of the peace, an internationalism which offers a solution of contradictions by spreading them out over a larger area—none of these can be the effective word of the Christian message of deliverance. It has been truly said 'While war may conceivably be a great enough

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evil to destroy this civilization, a greater evil would be the unchecked operation in a helpless world of those causes of which war is an effect.' To stop war by suppressing the external 'horizontal' conflicts of peoples, instead of delivering them from these by a resolution of their internal 'vertical' conflicts will be to intensify the social and spiritual tragedy of secularized man

While Christians can strongly influence the total situation by the message of deliverance, in the way this paper has attempted to indicate, there follow two specific ways in which it can be applied in the relation of the Christian body to its own national group. The attitude here defined is the only real basis of international forgiveness. Wars begin at home, everywhere. To see this and to declare it is the responsibility of the Church as the conscience of the community. That humbling self-understanding is the only real foundation for mutual understanding. Nations will then be rebuked by their own Christian community when they attribute deliberate international attitudes to others while allowing to themselves the moral solace of being compelled by circumstances. If Britain is told that France *wants* or Germany *demand*s or America *desires*, the Christian awareness in Britain will know the forces behind such apparent decisiveness and will know that they operate in Britain too. And when British politics speaks of being *drawn into* international complications unwillingly the same Christian mind will be ready to declare a similar self-deception there. In fact to expose the perpetual self-deception in our own national community in peace-time conditions is a task of the Christian mind which is necessary if it is to be listened to when it becomes necessary also to denounce the wholesale lying that marks the waging of hostilities. The Church with this insight can both convict of sin *and* forgive other nations and its own alike.

Finally the approach to the war situation here outlined sees that there is no serious international problem apart from the war problem. It rejects all forms of political 'monism' that assume peaceful living only possible when there is one political consciousness. War is an enemy of man, not his original condition out of which he has to evolve into some fantastic world state. This underlines a further practical consequence of our

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diagnosis, namely the Christian message about a world order. All that has been said above points to the chastening and stimulating truth that the resolution of the war situation can begin anywhere—that is for us, here and now. To insist that a problem cannot begin to be solved here and now and must wait until the whole world does the same—is an evasive fantasy. The approach here made holds uniquely the hope of peace based upon realities, for in its light one nation can disinfect itself from the common poison and thereby immediately lighten the tension everywhere.

. On this basis only can be refashioned the Christian philosophy of a world order, in which such an order is seen as a congress of communities healthy in themselves.

VI

CHRISTIAN STRATEGY

(MALVERN, 1941)

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The close of military operations in this war will mark a particular historic situation. It will still be a human situation, however inhumane it may have become. One of its predominant internal characteristics will undoubtedly be a large measure of totalitarianism, that is, restriction of personal and group initiative, and a merging of all social functions in one overwhelming mass policy. It would be futile for the Church merely to resist or obstruct this tendency. For though it is a threat to the liberty for which Christianity stands surety, it is also the only way in which modern society, having lost its Christian bearings, can try to cope with its problems. The Christian effort must therefore rather seek to transcend and work through this coming phase, so as to build up anew centres of liberty and social life with a robustness that has been missing in the late liberal epoch.

The essence of the totalitarian drift is to merge religion, politics and economics into one big unity of social activity. Its climax is to be seen in Germany where the Party is at once a church, a government and a business. This false fusion is not only destructive of freedom, it also prevents these three divisions of life from being mutually co-operative through their distinctive operations. They have their point of unity in man, as created by God, with his needs fulfilled in each sphere. But the essential nature of the human being demands that they shall not be fused together in the external organization of life. Therefore, Christian strategy must not be impatient for immediate propaganda results, but must consist in a long-view guidance on the way these three activities of man can recover their fruitful distinctiveness.

CHRISTIAN STRATEGY

This essay begins with some earlier sections on the religious situation, as it affects England in particular. Its two following divisions deal with the conditions of separating, first, religion and politics, then politics and economics, so that they support the whole life of man by recovering each its own vitality instead of clutching each other out of common debility

I. THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION

Reading God's Handwriting

We are trying to discover in this conference 'the fundamental facts which are directly relevant to the ordering of a new society, and how Christian thought can be shaped to play a leading part in the reconstruction'. The first relevant fact to be recognized by Christians is that insight and power of renewal will depend upon men knowing—or how many of the right kind of men know—that the hand of God has been at work in the process which has led up to this catastrophic situation. That insight and power will be denied to us if we regard the hand of God as stretched out in a moment of emergency to rescue us from the consequences of developments in which it has had no part.

We want to find out what possibilities will present themselves at the end of the war. They will not be unlimited, and in order to discover within what frame the alternatives lie we have first to ask what God is saying to us in this crisis of our historical existence. For a historic convulsion of this magnitude, so clearly marking the transition from one era to another, must be viewed by men of Christian faith as evidence that we—who *we* are will be thought of in a moment—have shirked our destiny. It can only mean that a leading section of the human race has rejected both the law of God for man as man, and also the particular vocation that divine providence has called upon it to fulfil at a particular time. The pain and tribulation of a crisis like this must be taken, not only as retribution, with all the tragic puzzles which that involves, but as corrective. That means, in so far as we can learn to what we have been faithless and the depth of our infidelity, we may without arrogant pretensions inaugurate a more fruitful and a happier phase of

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the human struggle—for struggle of some kind human life will always be on this side of Heaven.

The Task of Christian Leadership

The task of Christian leadership in reconstruction is therefore a strategic task, one in the pursuit of which we must recognize that not all human or even all Christian possibilities are open to us in the coming period. The outline of a new phase of human history will be drawn by limits set firstly, by our conscious aims, secondly by the bent of the soul in our own people and those involved with us in recent alliance and enmity, and thirdly by the external historic situation.

It is important to understand that the aims of men are often defeated not only by the poverty of spirit in which they are held or by the superior strength of opposing aims in other men, but by a contradiction between the collective aims and the collective emotions, feelings, memories, habits and assumptions never questioned, of the same men. This second set of forces I have called the bent of the soul. The contradiction between conscious aims and the bent of the soul is the conflict identified in the personal life by the masters of the Christian doctrine of saving grace. The process of recovery, or redemption, is that of bringing about a reinforcing collaboration between them. This costs the price of pain and suffering, but to see what is happening brings a new attitude to the pain and suffering endured in the last stages of the contradiction. This war is that pain and suffering for a period so momentous for human history that the upshot of it may well be the final alternatives of the first truly human revolution or 'the abomination of desolation' which will mark the end of the world.

To discuss fully my reasons for this verdict would take us too far afield, but in order to assess the possibilities before us it is necessary to define, so far as we can, the periods of which we are witnessing the convulsive close, the human groupings mainly responsible for incurring this judgment, and those who are free to take the lead in moulding a new phase.

It is not the commission of the Christian religion to be the handmaid of civilization, though Professor Toynbee who holds the converse to be the case, also admits a certain truth in the

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view of the Christian Church as a 'chrysalis', bridging the gap between one civilization and another ¹ There *will* be a reformation of civilization somehow and somewhere, because men *have* to create that complex of assumptions, desires, habits, customs and institutions which, below the level of the individual's deliberate and clear-sighted achievement, tide him over the patches in which his conscious awareness and talents are not at their full stretch. The question for Christians to-day is not whether there will be inaugurated a new civilization at an undated future, but whether the next few generations are to suffer more terrors before things settle down. If we are not allowed to regard our faith as a lever for heaving out of the human abyss a future civilized order, neither are we allowed to regard our contemporaries and immediate successors as sacrificial victims round which to build its foundations. They have their own eternal destiny to fulfil, and our responsibility is to see that they get all the help they can from a civilized environment. The breakdown of the civilization in which we are now living is marked by the fact that since the eighteenth century at least, the individual has got no help from his environment, but has rather been stifled by it. The totalitarian revolution is making out of this breakdown a deliberate and conscious goal. If, therefore, our children and grandchildren are to be saved from the worst horrors of our breakdown, then the immediate and fundamental task is to heal the gaping wound of the modern soul.

Europe is the Patient

Whose is that soul and what is the wound in it? It is the soul of the fountain-head of Christendom, namely Europe. Whatever importance we rightly attach to the world-wide societies of Christian people, the one great historic experiment in growing a Christian culture has been made in the Continent of Europe, including our own island. If Europe suffers cultural death it is very doubtful whether a Christendom will arise anywhere else. God may have it in His counsels to make one of the outlying societies the cradle of a new Christian society but that is not within our human vista.

¹ *Christianity and Civilization*, by Arnold Toynbee (S.C.M. Press).

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Our situation is the result of the breakdown of Christendom. It could not have happened in this form except for the configuration which Christianity has given to European Society. The main conscious aims of European civilization have derived from that impregnation of the Graeco-Roman world by the Christian dogma and spirit, and we have no other conscious aims to-day, or on the horizon of the future. The wound in the European soul is inflicted by the conflict between those aims, which are the only ones we have to live by, and the mass assumptions about reality and about man in particular which give the soul its emotional bent. The head of Europe is still Christian, its heart has been led astray. I think that those who state the problem of a Christian society as if we can count on a 'vestigial Christianity' in the unconscious depths of modern man, who has now to be made morally and intellectually aware of and committed to Christian values, are reversing the real state of things. This view is widely held by church people and it accounts for the inability of the modern Church anywhere to take the initiative. It is the secular religions which are kindling the emotions, while Christians talk as if only direction is required.

The task of healing the soul of European man is rather that of enabling him to recover the dogmatic convictions about the nature of existence which will give the soul the bent necessary for putting power behind the values in which he still residually believes. You can see how this psychic conflict has become a political one, between national groups who have thought that their allegiance to the values of Christendom was so much in the nature of things that they could not be obliterated, ignoring all questions of power, and other groups who now are under the opposite illusion that power by itself is the *summum bonum*.

The Scale of the Crisis

Let us now take a glance at the scale of the crisis of European society, in order to see what is under judgment through this war, and what is the vocation of England for the healing of Europe. Only in this context dare we discuss the possibilities at the end of the war. So far, all that we British can say for

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ourselves is that we have taken a stand against an evil, and are so far in the right. But to be in the right—especially if we emerge as the sole great power which has resisted the world challenge—will be a great snare to pride (The English are a proud people. The Germans are only conceited. Pride is a sin, being content with oneself because of one's virtues; whereas conceit is a misfortune, thinking highly of oneself for virtues one has not got.) The only medicine for pride is to learn that to be in the right is not enough, one must also be of some use—one must not only repent but bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. For us English people this means now taking responsibility for the future of Europe as a vocation. We may only regard ourselves as an instrument of Divine Providence if we are ready to be judged by our fidelity to what we have it in us to be for the world. The palmists tell us that the lines of the left hand indicate the person's foundation character, while those of the right indicate what he has made of it. To discover the possibilities before us is a process of disentangling our foundation character as a people from the way of life in which we have done violence to it, and building again upon the foundation with the material the present offers us. That is why I say our problem is a strategic one, and make no apology for a partly historical discussion.

II RELIGION AND POLITICS

The Two Powers

The first thing to be recalled, especially when we state our cause as the championship of freedom, is that England learned the conditions of freedom from her participation in Europe. The freedom we value, and which we take far too much for granted as something every people would value, is the fruit of a long specialized historical development. Its main source was the separation and consequent interaction of the spiritual and the secular authority, which is inherent in the supernatural and universal character of the Christian religion. This duality was brought to a high pitch in the struggles of Popes and Emperors. It has a more local embodiment in England in the Chancellorship, which provided the King with a conscience

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informed from the universal spiritual authority. In its various forms this separation and interaction gave the human mind a duality of allegiance which could not be merged into one conception. This made freedom possible. One authority could not swallow the other, though this nearly happened either way several times before the modern totalitarian period, where the Church becomes merged in the secular order.

The important feature of European civilization for our guidance here, is that it was formed by this duality having its expression in *the external organization of life* and not being left as a duality between this world and the other or between the State and an invisible Church. It was represented by a double institution on earth, and there is a close connection between the rise of totalitarianism (of a unitarian society which is Government, Church and Business in one) and removal of the duality from the organization of society while it was relegated to the realm of the soul. When I look for a historic type analogous to that of Hitler, I find it in the pre-Hildebrandine priestly emperors. For all his exaggerated claims Gregory VII did fix in Europe the idea of a universal spiritual law behind and often over against the positive law enacted by the ruler of a particular domain. And this persisted until the duality began to be dissolved in the sixteenth century. Lutheran theology helped mightily in the dissolution by substituting a contrast between the realm of grace and the realm of law. The significant fact for English history was the execution of the last of the chancellors, Thomas More. And there is an ironic sense in which the Puritan Revolution and the rise of Nonconformity are the revenge taken by the English in protest against incipient totalitarianism. Paradoxically, they were a recall to what the Pope and the Common Law and the Chancellorship had stood for—a realm of life whose law was not the fiat of the earthly sovereign, but something universal and divine to which he too was subject.

The Undermining of Freedom

My point is that this duality, reflected in the politics of Europe, is the very stuff of freedom. It can be lived in by decision at each critical moment because it could not be explained

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away intellectually England seems to me to represent a double-minded attitude to this tension. Her political life, as Christopher Dawson has shown so clearly, reflected a plurality of social functions, such as culture, knowledge, economic occupation and law, each with its own vitality drawn from a common sense of human purpose and therefore independently of the central executive. The self-dependence of social functions has been a much tougher basis of freedom than theories of democratic government or the responsibility of the individual for Parliament. On the other hand, on the religious plane, the whole development since the sixteenth century has tended to obliterate the tension between the eternal and temporal causes in the actual organization of society. The complex of King-Church-Parliament-Nation, as one thing, based on the notion of sanctifying society, has in practice, like all efforts touched by Calvinist influence, only succeeded in secularizing the Holy Ghost. I am not claiming that this is the immediate cause of our present danger of becoming ourselves a totalitarian society, but I think it is an explanation of the failure of English religion to provide a body of political judgments which would offset the tendencies, due to other causes, which have made for the subordination of all human activities to the one inclusive purpose of consolidating social power. There is a connection, which it is impossible to develop here, between the loosening, within the social order itself, of the tension between spiritual and secular authority, and the loss of criteria for bringing round mankind to a natural order after each phase of gross aberration. While the Wisdom of the East, the Law of Moses, and Platonic Republic, could offer the architecture of life without grace, Christendom cannot do so, because the forces which have done most violence to man's natural life—his man-centred thought and his arrogance in technique—have sprung from a perversion of energies released in Europe by the Christian religion. And as Professor Mannheim has pointed out, the *laissez-faire* theories of Adam Smith could have had no plausibility or lengthy life without the substratum of common values inherited from the Middle Ages. In Europe, health in the natural life demands continual inoculation by the supernatural virtues.

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Grace and Nature

All this helps us to estimate the scale of our problem. It means, that we are living in a crisis of Christendom, and in so far as 'Christianity is the fulfilment of the truly human' (Kierkegaard), it is one of the major crises of humanity. Now, because the Christian Church is involved in the disruption and also in the possibility of a 'New Order in Europe'—readers of Drucker's *End of Economic Man* will know how deeply it is involved—it has to find a renewed relation to society entirely different from that of the last three centuries. In brief, it has to take up the task where the break-up of the Middle Ages left it. In England the task is determined by a situation in which the religious foundations of liberty have been steadily removed during that period, but where the results of the older plurality of orders have survived in the practice of the liberal state until very recently. The results are now disappearing, and the beginning of a new epoch which understands freedom must, I think, involve the recovery of an analogue to the duality of two institutions in society, the one standing for eternal goods and their temporal reflections in the natural law, the other for the day-to-day business of running the world.

The precise nature of the Christian revolution required I am unable to contemplate. But I am certain that the Christian Church must deepen its insight in two directions, on each side, as it were, of its present role. That role seems to me to have been, in the sphere of public affairs, primarily an ethical one, though its moral advice and appeals are usually salted with the terminology of grace. At best, it has believed that its word was for the purifying of personal motive in the relationships of the social order as they are. At worst it has acted as the commissioned moral invigorator of national causes which find it difficult to appeal to their own intrinsic human excellence. In its next phase Christianity will be compelled, on the one hand, to strengthen its hold upon the eternal and supernatural realities in theology, in piety and in ritual (for it is in ritual, the things men do regularly, that the emotions and the will are canalized) and, on the other hand, to develop a theology of the Natural Law of human living with discernments that only

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the theology of grace can give, and use its findings for a definitely sociological set of judgments

The immediate future presents us with a choice between a Church which will take both grace and nature seriously and so preserve society from merely empirical opportunism, or else a recurring series of blind revolutions in society, each one only trying by reaction to minister to some need of man's nature neglected in the one before. In the latter case religious forces will divide into those which, repudiating the theology of grace, try to sweeten the sociological drift, and those which, rejecting any responsibility for nature and history, proclaim a purely apocalyptic soteriology. If the full theology of grace is not recovered, the Churches will become still more an appendage to secular movements, and totalitarianism will spread; if the theology of the Natural Law is not recovered society itself will divinize the natural and temporal order and find in some form of paganism the religion for its politics.

The Positive Revolution

Let us now turn to some other aspects of the European situation, in order to estimate the scale of its crisis. Here we are concerned with questions of the nature of man, many of which were not within the purview of the traditional natural law teaching in the past. Because an aspect of human existence was not talked about in that teaching, it does not mean that that part of human life was chaotic; it means that it was working fairly smoothly or had only straightforward practical difficulties to cope with and so did not arouse questions. The subjects treated in the tradition were those in which there were widespread disorder in practice, such as sovereignty, the family, money-lending and prices, much as dogmatic theology was developed in answer to actual heresies. If scholastic social teaching, like its theology, looks to us very rationalistic, that is a sign that the emotional side of life was then looked after by the practice and day-to-day teaching of the ministering Church, by the folk-life inspired by it and by a mass of pre-Christian wisdom lore. To-day at the turn of an age of rationalism, it is our emotional life that requires most education, as we can see from the hectic deliverance of politics and literature

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over to the primal urges in order to get a little vitality into their purposes. This is all I have to say about the cultural aspect of our crisis, though it deserves a great deal of attention in the field of education.

Politically, our crisis has a definite relation to the preceding European revolutions, the English (Cromwell, not William and Mary), the French, the Bolshevik and the Fascist. While each of these used forces derived from nationalist passion, they have all had continental effects. That is why they do not follow one another in the same national area; it is also a proof that even to this day Europe is still to a real extent a spiritual and cultural unity, and that its conflicts are really geographically exteriorized expressions of common psychic and social conflicts. And if we look at these revolutions of post-Renaissance Europe in a dialectical way, we get a forceful impression of a series of struggles to embody a wholeness of life, each answering the last, but missing the wholeness by giving absolute, divine value to the previously neglected elements of it. This impression appears to me to indicate a definite structure of the human spirit and a definite structure of society to respond to it, a frame in which, however, there can be many variations. Mankind is always seeking it. Europe has come nearest to finding it piecemeal, only to break up its approximations again. I think, therefore, we must be bold enough to envisage the post-war task as the fulfilment of the destiny of Europe. That is the only alternative to a series of clashes between totalitarian régimes each moved by fear of the last experiment or the opposite number. So long as men are moved by fear of what they reject and not by faith in what they make for, they experience the wrath of God. 'As a man searcheth, so is thy displeasure.' We in England stand in a situation in which, so far as I am able to see, there can be no further European revolution which is a negative reaction to the last. Nor, of course, can there be one in the name of the revolution before the last. Fascism is the contemporary form of socialism and to believe in the resurgence of Marxist Communism is but the dream of those who do not understand history. The French revolution with its emphasis upon *le moi* is liquidated; so is Russian Communism with its brittle dogma of class. We hope that the war will liquidate

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German National Socialism with its faith in the ultimacy of biological power. What then? Assuming some kind of military victory for us, we shall have a responsibility thrust upon us which it would be the Church's fine task to unfold as something imposed by God, for we have not sought it and we would gladly shirk it. Whether we can shoulder it is a question on which I will now offer some suggestions.

The Task of England

Can we, while retaining or regaining the frame of freedom which has marked the Liberal tradition in English public life, offer the model of a genuine 'New Order' of community and security? These are the things for which the Continent and many in this country are prepared to accept the spurious models now dangled before their dispirited eyes.

Freedom in the body politic, as in the individual, is not merely the opportunity to make choices, but the power to do so. Only when some things are settled, can other things be left open. Freedom can never mean doing what one likes, but only obedience to the laws of reality in the sphere where law obtains in order to release power to act in the sphere of the spirit. Freedom means strength to spare over and above that required merely to exist. Spiritual freedom is the fruit of faith and repentance, by which a man is no longer using up all his soul's energy in overcoming internal frictions. Then only can he take the risks of freedom in his external relations. With the irresistible oncoming of the mass society and its machinery of organization, Christians will have to cultivate widely and deeply this inner spiritual freedom. It will be the only source of the intellectual clarity and practical effort necessary for moulding the pattern of freedom in public life. But the nature of spiritual freedom also provides an analogy for the conditions of freedom in the framework of society. No group, national or otherwise, is free to co-operate with others unless it has a certain internal health. You are not free to suck the venom from another's snake-bite if your own system is infected with poison. Also, if any department of human life, such as politics or economics, is not true to its own job according to the structure of human and cosmic reality, it will prey on the department

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above it in the scale of human values and deprive it of its freedom. A bad economic order makes political freedom impossible, bad politics stultifies cultural and spiritual freedom in society. We in England have had such a robust liberal tradition in politics with a deep sense of public spirit, that we have taken it far too much for granted as in the nature of things, and overlooked the extent to which it has been undermined by the false order in economic life, of which we have been the most guilty party and a bad example to the world. That is why we are set the task of meeting a world challenge which has arisen out of blind and fervid protest against its results. We are now called upon to regenerate ourselves and a world corrupted by a rake's progress in which we English have been in the forefront. The disease with which we have infected the world is that of the domination of life by economic values. This has all but destroyed our own political freedom, debauched our culture and religion and stultified genuine economic activity itself. I have already stressed the need to '*distinguer pour unir*' the political and spiritual realms. The immediate problem, however, for a recovery of political and economic freedom out of the matrix of the mass society, is the separation of the economic system from the political. This can only be begun by recovering the proper purpose of economic activity. As Mr. T. M. Heron, the only Christian business man who has a Christian philosophy of business, as distinguished from the crowds who think they can Christianize motives inside a false frame, has said, 'the primary problem of planning is not "Education for leadership", but "Inquiry into the nature of the job".' Recovery of economic and political freedom requires as the first step that each reverts to the nature of its own job. If I only touch on the economic job here it is for want of time and because historically the liberal state was undermined in practice by the pressure of government entering into business. The latter had ceased to work naturally and failure to handle the so-called unemployment problem properly made masses of people evacuated from economic pursuits enter on invent planning, bossing, controlling and stabilizing activities.

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III. THE RECOVERY OF ECONOMIC HEALTH

The main requirements for restoring economic activity to its proper function are (1) The Dethronement of Trader Man, (2) Restatement of the Problem of Unemployment, (3) The recovery of Agronomic Responsibilities, i.e. recognition of man's organic dependence upon the earth. These tasks constitute the crucial problem at the conclusion of an age in which economic life has absorbed far more attention than it should do in any healthy society, very much as a dyspeptic sees life in terms of the stomach. And these requirements are not only the condition of arousing genuine social faith in our own future, they also indicate steps which must be taken, or have partly been taken, in order to win the war and to prevent another outbreak within ten years, and, again, they are the elements of the common task that awaits us and our enemies and the rest of Europe, of providing an alternative to vicious authoritarianisms. Autocracies are based upon the ideal of order in externals when there is no real order inside members of their communities.

The Dethronement of Trader Man

The English are called upon to redress one of the greatest historical errors of humanity, the error that economic goods are to be measured by trader's values. The error is the domination of economic purposes by the interests of exchange and sale; or in the terms of the late Will Dyson, the lordship of business man over artist man, by which he meant that social policy was formed more by the type which lives by exchanging and manipulating things and needs, than by the makers, users and enjoyers of things. There are several ways in which the economic deadlock of industrialism can be described. I have attempted a few technical ones myself. But this statement in terms of types of man is the most inclusive and fundamental. Moreover, Christians like to talk airily about personality; let us then do so seriously and look at the havoc which a certain kind of 'persona' has made of economics, in order to see the need to dethrone it. It is unfortunately necessary to remind

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even a theological audience that there are other evils than those which come from bad interpersonal motives. We are not here concerned with questions of the integrity of a certain class of men; it is the place they take in the scale of social functions that is in question. Trader man's values are the opposite of those of the makers, the craftsmen and the users of things. For trader man a scarcity of good things is more valuable than a plenitude of them; the exchange value of each is thereby greater. The quintessence of the trader spirit is to be seen in the financier and banker as moneylender. But trader man includes all who thrive on commissions earned solely in the *movement* of things, of labour, of money and of debts. In this category belong not only banking, stock exchange, insurance, but also salesmanship, advertising, most of the press, and the bureaucracy of a modern state. These things have a usefully moderate place in any complex society, but if it is a directive instead of a humble place, the Natural Law of economic life is violated. Moreover, beyond a certain point their extent is socially harmful. For instance, 100 insurance clerks in a community may represent a sensible provision of social prudence, but the 101st may well represent the beginning of vested interest in multiplying the dislocations and insecurities of life.

The most outrageous effects of the predominance of trader man, signified in the concealed political dictatorship of "The City" in a modern community, came to a head in the last inter-war period. This was characterized by artificially induced scarcities, by waste of material and energy, by the colossal growth of public debts; and these three, scarcity, waste and indebtedness, are the things on which trader man thrives most. Industrial-commercialist communities have therefore been prevented from enjoying the fruit of their labour and skill; every unit of economic wealth produced could only be distributed by money earned in further activity. It meant that one could not buy a turnip without making part of a lathe to pay for it; when the sale of lathes could not be kept up at home and then abroad at the required pace, armament shells proved more efficient; they quickly have to be replaced and are sent abroad for nothing or rust on dumps at home. This is the kernel of the alleged need for expansion as the condition of

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economic survival. It keeps the mass of men in the position of the donkey running after the carrot dangled before his nose, always chasing but never earning the full reward of nature's bounty and human skill. It exercises an unconscious form of government, subordinating all social activities to an economic wild goose chase. It is a form of economic totalitarianism. I therefore reject entirely the antithesis, often made sincerely but mistakenly for freedom's sake, between the system of financial-industrialism and a drift toward collectivism and totalitarianism. Totalitarianism is inherent in the domination of the economic function by business man.

Judgment against the market-seeking economy of trader man is upon us, though there are still voices like the one quoted anonymously by Commander King Hall, who wrote 'A well-known and respected figure in our public life recently told some boys that they must fit themselves for the commercial battle for the world's markets which will follow the war.' (*The Times*, 16th November.) That such figures are still respected instead of being arraigned as corruptors of youth shows how little we have read the signs of judgment. The clearest of these signs is the menace of a foe which has acquired power through a claim to have put the trader mentality in its place and released its nationals from the insecurity prevalent in societies dominated by that mentality. The fact that Germany's alternative is a deliberate form of slave-state and that it likewise requires expansion for survival, does not affect the judgment upon the other system. It only means that until the elements of the problem are set the right way up according to Natural Law, there will be many false and terrible answers to it. And until we have made our own correction of the trader's account of economic life, our objection to Teutonic expansion looks too much like 'old men giving good advice when they are no longer in the condition to set a bad example' (La Rochefoucauld). We know now that expansion is not all it has been cracked up to be, that territorial possessions or dominions are not indefinitely a relief from the consequences of a self-frustrating economy, and that strains between peoples of the same kin and language are as great as those between foreigners, especially in the matter of indebtedness.

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We also see in Germany's justification of her world policy a heightened replica of our own readiness to assign the causes of our internal problems to misbehaviour in the rest of the world. The economic blizzards of the twenties and early thirties were attributed to 'world causes' and thus, in principle, is the same error with which Hitler can persuade his people that all who would impede his demand for '*Lebensraum*' are set upon destroying their national life. Men always tend to translate their common problems into collective ones in order to shirk relieving the tensions first at home. It is the fallacy that by expanding the size of a problem you thereby get over its intractable logic, a fallacy often committed in modern theology.

The most terrible judgment upon the supremacy of trader man is to be discerned when we look at the extent to which it has incapacitated us in Britain from realizing the forces making for war. Because we assumed that economic bonds, especially commercial ones, were the most fundamental, we were unable to appreciate the force of political and psychological developments in Europe. It made us do less than justice to the Barbarian across the Rhine. We invested money in his vices and could do nothing to encourage his virtues, because our politico-trader empiricism prevented us from understanding a fundamentally dynastic and tribal people.

Our war chances are dreadfully weakened by an economy relying much more than need be upon vulnerable commercial links overseas, for necessities of life and defence. The corruption of all political and economic purposes by the primacy of the selling mentality had foisted on us a so-called 'economic law' which decreed that it was necessary to sell to Germany the things indispensable for her rearmament, from nickel to iron-ore and petrol. Of course, if we had not sold them to Germany the economic organization of Great Britain and Canada and the United States would have had to be altered. Because we would not consider that, the war *has* altered our organization and we *have* to exist without that export trade with Germany. Instead, we are giving the stuff away and receiving more of it back in the form of bombing expeditions. If that handwriting on the wall is not clear enough to make us take the direction of national and economic policy out of the hand of trader man,

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then we deserve to be vanquished by people who have shown that the organization of society can be altered

It is also because we have not yet faced the necessity for an alteration as positive and human as the dictatorial revolutions are negative and inhuman, that no one has dared to give the only proper answer to Hitler's denunciation of '*Die Plutokraten von London*'. The answer is that the financial and commercial interests formed the appeasement party and would have kept peace at almost any moral and political price, that it was the emergence of a pre-capitalist element in the English, still there, thank God, to be awakened, which, by plebiscitary pressure capturing parliamentary initiative, determined to resist Hitler's marauding, and then dragged Churchill out of the obloquy cast upon him by the unholy alliance of eudaemonistic pacifism and the miserable commercialism of the trader spirit

The future of England both in war and in reconstruction depends upon fostering those pre-capitalist elements in English life which the war has stung into throwing off the hold which the trader spirit had got upon them. But there are many obstacles to be overcome, such as the commercialist racket's exploitation of the war situation, the desperate shortage of public men who are not tarred with its brush, the impossibility of counting upon such real belief in England as would elicit the maximum exertion from its workers without inflated war wages or would put public support behind total conscription of man and money power

The war is pressing us to return to the spiritual, physical and human realities necessary for the building of peace. If we do not accept that judgment, if we leave the social accounts of mankind to be kept by that liberated slave called financial or business man, who keeps them wrong, then we shall either lose this war or else scrape up some kind of victory in order certainly to lose the next one.

Restatement of the Unemployment Problem

In one important aspect the war is the explosion of a world seeking employment, a world which has not made the mental, moral and spiritual adjustment necessary to accept as a boon the energy put at its disposal by nature and human brains. It

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is certainly not surprising that modern man has failed here, for it involves an adjustment on the scale represented in earlier periods by the discovery of fire or the transition from food gathering to agriculture. Apart from difficulties belonging to every change in age-long conditioned attitudes, there are two special reasons why modern man has found it impossible as yet to restate the problem of unemployment. One is that he has concentrated his mental powers upon perfecting the *means* of doing things, has lost the habit of reviewing his purposes and has had no help in doing so from those who should have been the custodians of meaning in life and its activities, the teachers, the philosophers and the Church. The second reason is that the financial and business-making world has so succeeded in wasting effort, in causing the maximum expenditure of energy for a given economic result, that the degree to which economic livelihood could be had on easier terms has been concealed, until the spread of the industrial and chemical arts in a limited world has forced it upon our attention. It is quite unfair to blame capitalism for not making enough work; it has done its ridiculous best to multiply effort; from forcing as much stuff upon foreigners and taking as much work from them as possible, to selling me six things I don't want when I buy a stick of shaving soap I do want, namely, a beautiful metal box, a sheet of directions, a carton, a piece of paper, sealing wax and gas to fix it. It has made it more and more difficult to get a good thing repaired and succeeded in the art of stimulating rapid obsolescence so that new models must continually be bought.

For all its valiant efforts industrialist-commercialism has not managed to give security by means of full employment. What it could not do through the business man's distortion of economics, Germany has done by giving up all pretence at making it an economic goal. Readers of Drucker's *The End of Economic Man* know how National Socialism has definitely set out to reach non-economic goals of which Full-Employment is the chief, and has succeeded.

Any serious attempt to find an alternative to totalitarianism must either accept the proposition: if full-employment is the only condition of security for the mass of men, then a totalitarian slave state is the only one that can give it security, or

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else deny the conditional premise and dissociate security from full-employment. The very interesting articles in *The Times* on Nazi Finance last October made it clear that the Reich set about providing unlimited orders for itself, failing the required increase of exports. Unlimited markets at home in order that unemployment might disappear! *The Times* correspondent points out somewhat innocently that Germany has not thereby advanced one step towards a satisfactory economic solution. No, but neither has any country that sets full-employment up as a primary economic goal. Germany's stimulus to world rearmament has allowed the Democracies too to get the answer we all wanted, more employment. Slave-states and war are the only right answers to the wrong question.

If we are to restate the problem—and that is the only alternative to suicidal competition—we must turn our minds over and over again to the elements of the Natural Law in social and economic life in order to free them from accepting conventional relations and connections as natural. It is because there has been no responsible body of thought to re-examine means and ends at every stage, that we still make a rough equation between economic results and human effort, and base our distributing mechanism upon that equation, when in fact the use of natural in place of human energy has colossally altered the relation of the two. For the same reason the machine has too often been blamed for the unnatural mechanization of modern life. This is attributable rather to a habit of mind which really does not accept the genuine machine but in subservience to the business spirit spreads mechanism all over life for the sake of multiplying the activities which are necessary for income and survival on our false premises.

The real problem of our age is not how to secure full-employment, but 'to what ends and values are we devoting the superabundant faculties of man'. If we get the problem set the right way up, then measures to give security in decreasing dependence upon redundant effort will find their right expression. There will be an interim period after the war when policy can be directed to finding employment, for that is what we have been asking for, but at some time soon we shall have to undertake a more long-term restatement along the lines I have

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indicated. And I would point out here, that any recovery of status for the population engaged in economic pursuits requires a condition in which a job looks for the man and not the man for the job.

Respect for the Earth, or Fulfilment of Agronomic Responsibilities

Behind all our wars and economic systems lies the final dependence of mankind for life upon organic nature. Both the false economics of industrialist-commercialism and their logical fulfilment in modern wars have hidden from us that here is a reality to which obedience must be quickly and consciously restored. The earth upon which we live is being drained of its power to support plant, animal and human life, by the breaking of its vital reproductive cycle under the spur of capitalist and socialist aggressiveness. The common problem of all mankind is that it will soon perish unless it devotes its enhanced powers to respectful culture of the earth and nurture of populations to tend it. We cannot go on subduing the earth unless we are allowing it to be replenished. The alarm has been sounded loudly enough. The authors of *The Rape of the Earth* have given us the fundamental document; Lord Lynington's *Famine in England* is pretty frightening. 'Not only has the producer of primary products throughout the world been exploited by finance and industry, but the soil of the earth, by which alone we can live, has been devastated and destroyed during the past generation, in a manner which makes the damage wrought by all the barbarian invaders in the past insignificant in comparison' (P. C. Loftus, M.P.) The fate of the Thames valley, so largely now covered with concrete, is only a tiny sign of the destruction, in the last fifty years, of more good land than was used up in the past three thousand.

The problem of reproduction is fundamental in every sphere to-day, personal and cultural as well as agricultural. Humanist man has treated the earth just as he has behaved towards Almighty God; he has lived on it without recognizing his dependence; he has used the life it has given him to turn against it in aggressive self-dependence and exploitation; and he turns to it conscience-stricken in emergencies for a quick recovery from calamities.

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Look again at the judgment to be read in the war situation. The Germans, who all along the line represent a later stage of our own problem, are by force instead of money wanting to make themselves the leading industrial nation fed by agricultural peoples living at a lower standard. Our handling of that problem can only be a genuine 'New Order' with a balanced economy in each administrative area.

It would not be enough, though it would be a great deal, carefully to husband the food-producing parts of the world as they are now distributed. It is necessary for social health that the rhythm of organic life shall be under the eye of every citizen. The real human significance of the town as a place to live in as well as to work in, requires that the present malignancy of city life shall be cured by a proper balance between urban and rural elements. Moreover, this question has an important political bearing. If the world goes on with its present specialization, food producing and machine-factory being widely separated geographically, then the only planning can be world planning. Along that road freedom is impossible. It puts the executive at the farthest possible distance from the place where things are done. And no group of finite, sinful men can be trusted with planning powers for the whole earth. Furthermore, a man cannot exercise political pressure upon his government unless he can eat. If his food has to come a great distance and if its delivery involves a complicated series of world-planning decisions, political and economic freedom are gone for good.

There is a profound religious side to the need for recovering a respectful attitude to the earth. It has been stated by Solovyev in Chapter VII (Section III) of his *The Justification of the Good*, a work on ethics with an architectural wholeness missing in most Western treatments of the moral question. Unless we respect what is below us, he says, it will become our master. Matter has a right to moral and spiritual usage. If it is exploited it soon reminds us that we are its dependents.

CONCLUSION

Dethronement of Trader Man, Restatement of the Unemployment Problem, and Fulfilment of Agronomic Responsi-

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bilities are the basic requirements for enabling economic life to do its proper job. They are therefore essential for dissolving the forces making for an omniscient State absolutism. To understand them is also necessary for defining the basis of a common European recovery for which we can solicit the help of our present enemies. Without acknowledging them as conscious aims we shall not be able to take the first step in preventing the recurrence of war, namely to impose severe military and strategic disabilities upon Germany and at the same time to foster her economic and cultural recovery, reversing the course of events after Versailles. We cannot utter peace aims until we know how to offer security without expansion and war.

I have said nothing about the relationship and behaviour of persons and classes to one another, nor of changes in administration. These are very important, but they are secondary to the questions of the right order in the activities of man. It is in this up-and-down dimension that modern life has gone radically wrong and prevented or confused the effects of the considerable social goodwill that exists. Upon truth in the dimension of earth-society-spirit depends the power of good personal and group motives to be socially co-operative and mutually reinforcing.

And I have not discussed measures, for that is not the business of the Church. If Christians are to make their best contribution to the formation of a right social will, they can learn something of its conditions from their experience in using moral and spiritual direction. When the will is failing over and over again to meet a recurring temptation or crisis, when it fails to function though the mind knows never so clearly what has to be done, then one has to give up trying to pump up voluntary energy at the moment of crisis. The channels of the soul have to be recut, and that is done at one's prayers and meditations and thoughts away from the tension of the problem. If the intention is directed by the mind and conscience when one is poised in attention before the eternal things, then gradually the will is formed and comes into being when the practical situation requires it.

In a similar way the Christian community can form its own

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will and help to form that of the nation. The channels of the national soul need cutting in new directions. I have tried to trace a few of them for the use of the Christian Church which must always be able to say as did King Magnus in Shaw's *The Apple Cart* 'In this I represent the eternal not the expedient '

VII

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It is still a common practice in England and America to speak of the Church as the body that exists to give the world its moral and social ideals, and also as a kind of power house to put enough spiritual energy behind the best-meaning projects of society. A well-known Anglican bishop was completely taken in a few years ago when an eminent financier pleased him by saying 'You know, Bishop, we cannot solve this world problem ourselves; we need the help of the Church.' The meaning no doubt was 'If the Church will persuade men to take their deprivations on their knees, then our interests will look as if they were really laws.' But whether genuine or not, the attitude that the Church exists to help the world is the same as that implied in the title of that excellent book published in the United States, *Religion Lends a Hand*. This attitude reached its climax when a dignitary read a lecture to some clergy on 'The Function of God.' The whole assumption that religion should be of 'use' has become so much a part of Anglo-Saxon unconsciousness that it would be harsh to call it blasphemous, but it would have to be called by that name in any epoch more religiously aware than this one.

I

This desire for a practical religion undoubtedly grew up as a corrective of that irrelevant personal pietism which was a refuge from rather than the solver of the problems of living. And no small part of the religious crisis of our day is the realization that this practical religion is just as irrelevant in moulding history as the pietism it wished to displace. Many serious Christians feel that if they have to be irrelevant anyway, they

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would rather be irrelevant on their knees before their Maker than at the most brilliant conference on social ethics. The collapse of 'practical' religion is especially manifest in the feebleness of this faith in the presence of political movements that are sweeping away all the landmarks of our customary historical and social thought. A satisfying religion can be recovered only by a rediscovery of the way in which the impact of the Christian religion has ever, in fact, made history. And then the task is to find the way in which that impact can be brought to bear on the present historical moment. The faith has to be presented not merely as a set of eternally valid truths which ought to be embodied in society if men were all Christians, but as a power that will make men Christian because it takes hold of their problems where they are.

This presentation demands that the Church cease from pretending that the problems men have are the problems Christians would like them to have and then give the right answer. The Church must also cease trying to give a better answer than the world to the problems the world has set in its own way. It must take the problems men have and show that they are insoluble unless they are restated in terms of the nature of reality as the Christian faith knows it. The extent to which the faith is a reality to a particular generation is determined much more by the way it states its questions than by the way it gives answers. I raise therefore the question whether the failure of 'practical' religion may not be due primarily to the fact that Christians have set the problem in a way borrowed from the well-meaning world instead of in authentic Christian terms.

Among those who are concerned to Christianize civilization the commonest way of stating their problem is to speak of a discrepancy between ideals and practice. Practice falls far below the ideal, and the problem is to raise the practice to the level of the ideal. Christians are impressed by the seriousness of the present situation—the fact that although men have almost perfected the means of living, this achievement is likely to be lost or turned into disaster because they lack any sense of the meaning and purpose of life. They then ask how the Church can infuse Christian principles and ideals into this modern secular humanitarianism.

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The problem was amply and strikingly developed in this way by Sir E. J. Russell in his Hibbert Lecture of 1936, 'Modern Conflicts of Practice and Ideals'. We may take that lecture as the best example of this delincation of the problem. The lecture is itself the strongest evidence that the problem cannot be stated or handled in the form of the 'conflict of practice and ideals', for the speaker himself concludes by stating an entirely different problem. He rejects the political totalitarianism of Russia and Germany where 'there is no conflict of ideals with practice simply because there ideals and practice are alike in the hands of the rulers'. It is not a conflict between them but the distastefulness of both the practice and the ideals that leads him to hope for another solution. This alternative he sees in the possibility of 'a compelling ideal that will inspire men and women with a high purpose and fire them with energy and enthusiasm to achieve it'. What is a 'compelling ideal'? Does the mere fact that it is a high one make it compelling? That cannot be, for Sir E. J. Russell holds that the Christian ideal is the highest known, and the problem he sets before us consists in the fact that it is not now compelling.

I venture to argue that the whole conception of a conflict between practice and ideals is misleading and even mischievous. In fact, the modern habit of expressing the problem in that way is part of the problem itself. It implies on the one hand a kind of mental picture of what men want to do and to be, which is the ideal, and on the other a kind of magic fluid called 'will' that could be pumped up to a certain intensity when it will enable men to knock the actual world about to make it match the picture. May not the very reason why Christian ideals are ineffective be that we have now for some centuries thought of the Christian religion as the dispenser of ideals and the voice of exhortation to the sluggish will, whereas in fact the Christian Church which converted the world began not with ideals or exhortation but with affirmation of the nature of reality? It was a doctrine of what is much more radically than of what ought to be. The nature of God, the essential nature of man and the forces which cause him to violate his essential nature—it was what the Christian gospel declared about such things that made it 'good news'.

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Christ speaks to men of what they are—'children of the Father', 'branches of the vine', 'runaway sheep', 'children of wrath'—as the ground of his call to obedience. And this is said against the background of what God is and what God does. The whole drama of redemption was seen by the early Church as something God does because man is a certain kind of creature. And because this conviction of his nature and destiny became burned into the soul of the Christian man, he turned the world upside down and restored hope in a disintegrated empire. This accomplishment would never have been achieved by a proclamation of ideals, pictures of what human life should be like. Nothing is clearer from the everyday life in personal and public relations than that men are but slightly moved to action by advice and exhortation or by visions of an ideal world. They *are* moved by words of affirmation as to what they are or can be, a revelation of the truth about themselves that comes as a discovery, or they are moved to act by provocation at an offensive declaration of what someone thinks they are. The faith that has moved men has always been an indicative before it was an imperative.

II

Another feature of the Christian faith when it is a compelling fact is that it knows nothing of a conflict of practice and ideals. It knows only a conflict of wills, or a divided will, or an imperfect will. And the will is the act which looked at from the inside is motive or what we may call the ideal, and looked at from the outside is the practice. There can be no ideal that does not issue in practice even if the practice is only to sit and spin day-dreams. An apparent conflict of ideals and practice is in fact a conflict of ideals or a conflict of practices, the same thing viewed subjectively or objectively. The idea of a will behind an act and an ideal behind the will is just the rationalized psychology of the ineffective man and of a civilization with many means and no purposes.

Saint Paul says 'The good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not that I practise.' The conflict is real, in the core of the man. 'O wretched man that I am! who shall

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deliver me from this body of death?' To speak of a conflict of practice and ideals is to use a totally misleading expression of this terrible struggle. What happens, happens in the citadel of the person. This is the person who when he had won the victory converted the world. Can we imagine this triumph being achieved by a modern who would have said: 'I'm afraid I have not succeeded in putting my ideals into practice, I must really try?' In fact, to set the problem as a conflict of ideals and practice is to draw the same picture as the man who sees his condition as one in which he cannot do what he wants. With Saint Paul it is a conflict of ideals, 'two laws', and a conflict of practices—for unless it were also this there would be no real struggle. Just because what we call ideals are desires that are successfully opposed either from within or without, it is useless to speak of solving the conflict between ideals and practice, and still more unreal to imagine that this is possible by an inculcation of more exacting ideals. This very Saint Paul tells us that it was awareness of the ideal—'the law'—that made his will less effective. His conflict is solved not by a process of bringing practice into line with ideals, but by recognition of another fact, the will of God that then becomes his own, the 'law of the spirit of life in Christ, which made me free from the law of sin and death'.

Saint Augustine too, in the famous passages of the eighth book of the *Confessions*, bears witness to the truth that the contrast between 'the two wills' is the state of man before he can act willingly. When the conflict was resolved 'the ability was one with the will, and to will was to do'.

These examples, which could be extended by a study of other men who have made Christian history, such as Luther and Ignatius Loyola, illustrate the way in which they set the problem. It is for them not a question of infusing a man or a culture with Christian ideals, but of healing a broken or a divided will within it. And that divided will, which may be called a conflict of practices or a conflict of ideals, has first to be identified. As Maurice Reckitt once said: 'Man cannot choose between God and mammon until he has learnt how to distinguish them, and that [distinction] it is religion's responsibility to make plain.' Religion is a word of truth about the 'is' before it can be a word of power about the 'ought'. We

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cannot therefore take our humanist culture as a neutral receptacle which now lacks a purpose and replenish it with Christian values and ideals. There are such ideals within it, but the very fact that they remain so pitifully within the realm of ideals is a challenge to examine the nature of the culture itself. And we shall find that it is not a neutral receptacle for ideals but a complex structure with a divided will, of which such Christian 'ideals' as there may be constitute one of the divisions.

III

It is necessary to distinguish between the technical bag of tricks which applied science has put into our hands and the empirical humanism of the same epoch. The first is morally neutral, an instrument of power for good and evil. Is the second? E. J. Russell thinks so, and speaks of giving it a driving force, and of interpreting and using the ideals and principles of Christianity 'in our present economic and social conditions'. Now, it is just the impossibility of so interpreting and using these ideals which has impressed those who have been most thoroughly working and thinking on this question. The social order, though showing no clear and conscious guiding principle, is nevertheless not morally neutral but has in it something that makes it insusceptible of being infused with 'Christian ideals'. Some of us have reached the conclusion that you cannot 'apply the Christian ethic' to a social order which has grown up without any direction by a Christian philosophy, and by this we mean not merely a doctrine of the 'ought' but a doctrine of the 'is'. Russell pertinently quotes, 'Bear ye one another's burdens'. Yes, but how are we to do it? A year or two ago we were given some contradictory advice by economists on one aspect of bearing one another's burdens. The public was told by one set of experts that if a man had five shillings to spare at the end of the week unless he spent it over a counter he would be putting another man out of work for a day; another set of experts advised him to save it and invest it so that industry would be developed through his savings and would give more work to his fellows. The whole discussion assumed that it was

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the purpose of man to keep industry going. The contradictory character of the advice, to which there is as yet no accepted answer, is evidence that the assumption itself is false and that the whole organized relationship of men is built upon that false assumption

How is the inventor to serve his fellows when he knows that to use his God-given faculties to the full will probably be to put many men out of work? How are nations to be good neighbours when they are compelled by their own internal economic dilemmas to compete with others not for goods but for work as a means of income? How is the right-minded politician to serve his constituents when the political machine through which he has reached the position in which he can serve them has grown up around certain views of an issue that has no reality to the population? How are producers of goods and administrators of money to bear one another's burdens when the principles of the latter compel the former to stop producing or to pour their products down the sink? How is the artist to feel at home in creating something that is a joy forever when the commercial system demands rapid destruction and obsolescence in order to keep going?

These and other acute questions indicate that we are facing a problem not so much of the behaviour of men within their organized activities, but of the function, relations and validity of those activities themselves. Where there is no overarching conception of the meaning and purpose of life— and the lack of this is the mark of our empirical humanism— then each of the activities of men struggles to assume the position of the key of life as a whole and there is a disruption of any true hierarchy of activities. So in fact we have seen, during the last century or two, economics, money, politics, sex and arts— each of them endeavouring to order society so that man shall behave as a function of itself. Now we are at a stage in which nation and race are struggling to wrest supremacy from commercial idolatries as the key to human existence. This disorder, which gives rise to the moral dilemmas just indicated, means too that there is a real conflict of objectives in the various activities and interests of society. And when one of these activities is out of its true order in the scheme of living, then it frequently becomes

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the more harmful, the better and more conscientious are the people who pursue it. That is what has happened to our humanist culture—it has ceased to be human. The activities of men are not directed in the interests of human living itself. Each becomes its own end and succeeds for a time in squeezing society into subservience to it until it is displaced.

It might be contended that precisely because a humanist culture has no *Weltanschauung*, which knows the key of human life to be in the superhuman or divine sphere, it cannot truly remain human. But for the purpose of the argument it is sufficient to insist that society can, for want of a diffused sense of the purpose of life, be much less human in its order than the persons who compose it. This feature of modern civilization is almost a reversal of the situation in any of the cultures of the ancient and medieval world. There men were generally much more violent, unscrupulous and unprincipled than the social order built up by the theories and practice of their thinkers and legislators.

It would not be difficult to trace this new situation in human history to the tendencies which began with the making absolute of the human mind at the Renaissance, the negation of man's relatedness to the objective world of God, the earth and his fellows, the emergence of a conception of him as pure subject confronting the objective world as a God-like spectator and manipulator. In order to eject man out of his concrete dependences, humanist thought had to divide him into two. M. Maritain has aptly parodied the influence of Descartes by saying that it encouraged the view of man as an angel driving a machine. The subjective being with the freedom of the angel became the concern of religion, the external instrument, the machine, was the sphere of empirical living, and in this sphere man's relatedness to his environment could not be ignored. So modern man has been pressed to see himself as a subjectively free and objectively determined being. The sphere in which he had to recognize his dependence was that in which he had perforce to admit his relatedness, namely, the physical world and the sphere of public life.

This split between the spiritual and secular spheres is the root of the developments that have reached a state of crisis to-

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day The external life of man, having lost any spiritual direction, has no guiding principle but that of efficiency. And because this dichotomy of man is really an illusion, his external relations do not remain spiritually a *tabula rasa* open to any moral directions idealists want to write upon it. By virtue of its divorce from conscious ethical direction the natural order of human organization has been inverted. Spiritual responsibility having been relegated to the purely subjective and 'spiritual' realm, modern attempts to bring Christian principles to bear upon the social order have reached an impasse. Man having been deified in his soul receives a sharp slap in the face when he discovers his impotence in directing the course of events. So we have on the one hand a capitulation to the trend of events, a renunciation of spiritual and moral direction. Situations, not men, dictate action. And on the other hand, we have an inchoate cry for spontaneity and liberation from the constraints which are accepted as necessary safeguards against social disintegration.

The dilemma is made more intolerable by the Pelagian habit of Anglo-Saxon religion which encourages the notion that the will can act as the agent of the absolute good in any social situation. Men are thus continually mistaking their relatively better decisions for decisions that embody the absolute good. That is the whole ethos of modern politics and economics. To take a moral outlook which for generations has been confined to making judgments upon the motives and acts of men, and attempt to apply it in a concrete social structure which has grown up in entire independence of a religious philosophy, is to deepen and not to relieve the tragedy of man and to foster disillusionment instead of encouragement. It is to drive deeper the wedge that has separated the inner and outer life for the last two centuries. It is to shout the louder a word of exhortation, where man is craving for a word of deliverance. It is to turn the gospel of redemption into a nagging moralism.

There is a word of deliverance to be uttered: it is possible to bring the outer life of man into congruity with his inner life. That is not to say there will be an end of moral problems; on the contrary, it means that moral problems will be real ones. In an age where there is some parallelism between the best in

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the motives of men and the order of activities in organized society, every antisocial act is a deviation from the normally recognized standard and moral issues become matters of real decision. When, as in our disordered society, we have not only evils but frustrations of the moral will, it is a sign that the social structure does not reflect the moral conscience. Albert Schweitzer believed he had found in the eighteenth century a culture with harmony between the ethical demands of men and the order of society: 'In the days of naturalism and serious philosophy the individual got help and support from society through the general confidence in the victory of the rational and moral which society never failed to acknowledge as something which explained and justified itself' (*The Philosophy of Civilization*, Part I). That general concord between the inner life of men and their external social living is a mark of civilization; then all serious decisions are within the sphere of the moral will. There are reasons for doubting whether Schweitzer is right in estimating the eighteenth century as a model of the form of civilization, but the criterion he lays down is the correct one.

It is the conflict between the inner and outer life that constitutes the problem which is misleadingly stated as a conflict of practice and ideals. To infuse 'ideals' into the motives of men before having effected 'a renewing of the mind' about the structure of civilization is to ignore what is fundamental in the Christian gospel, namely, that moral appeals come after healing and deliverance, not before. Men in the mass are not open to moral appeals unless they feel that those appeals are a call to them to come back into a mode of life which underlies, in acknowledgement if not obedience, the civilization of which they are a part and from which they have wilfully and sinfully departed. When appeals take the form of bidding men to act in a spirit contrary to the whole mood of society which has been dominant for some generations, they will be effective only with those who can afford to try experiments or with the few heroic souls who are likely to give their heroism luciferic pretensions and to despise their weaker brethren.

It is just this relative correspondence between the inner and outer life that is aimed at in the totalitarian societies of our

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time. And if Christians, like Sir E. J. Russell, find totalitarianism distasteful, they must discover how to meet the same problem in a healthier and more acceptable way. The one thing that cannot be done is to intensify the impulse generated in the inner life and apply it like a mustard plaster to the outer life whose form has been determined by forces unrelated to the former. You cannot, for instance, materially 'apply ethical principles', except to a negligible extent, to the activities within the structure of an economic system whose end has been admittedly divorced from ethical direction for some centuries. This is almost an impossibility even when economic life is an economic if ruthless success; it is quite an impossibility when it has reached a condition of economic contradiction, as when to-day industry has at the same time to save work and to make work. You cannot moralize a contradiction.

It might be further shown that modern secularism, by allowing each human activity to find its own end undirected by an overruling conception of the destiny of man, has resulted not in a merely natural purpose, but actually in a falsification of that activity's natural purpose. 'The moral impulse becomes a reality only in a situation which is at least natural. When it has become unnatural a deeper influence than exhortation is required. Reinhold Niebuhr well says in his recent *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* 'Moralistic appeals are in fact indications of the dissipation of primary religious vitality. . . . What men are able to will depends not upon the strength of their willing, but upon the strength which enters their will and over which their will has little control.'

And the impotence of the moral will which is not formed by deeper forces of faith, operating in a situation that is not informed by the same influences, is shown most clearly in the way the deliberate hopes of a whole era are suddenly turned into their dialectical contraries. The last phase of liberal humanism was inaugurated by the triple hope of material prosperity, international peace and democratic progress. The conditions and machinery for these things have been achieved in abundance. The very success of large-scale production is made an occasion for restricting its output in order that men may satisfy the conditions of acquiring it. The very interdependence

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of states, which Richard Cobden and Herbert Spencer hoped would prove an international cement, has sharpened rivalry all along the line. The democratic idea is so perverted even in countries that still retain its rickety skeleton that Mr Baldwin can say. 'In a democratic country it will be more and more necessary for the government to interfere in the lives of the people.'

The liberal humanism of our recent past presents us then not with a failure to achieve its aims which could be cured by more intensive or higher ideals, but with the requirement that it be purged of a self-defeating principle. And we can learn much of the way in which the Christian faith can effect this purging by examining the way in which the human spirit is attempting the same thing in those perverse ways exhibited by secular totalitarianism. In the totalitarian societies of contemporary Europe a vigorous and largely successful effort has been made to unify the inner and outer life of man. It is open to Christians to say that these unities are unstable because they suppress certain aspects of human reality which will not tolerate them indefinitely, but that merely sets the Christian community the task of offering a principle of unity which is at once more congruous with man's whole nature and also as practical as these cramping unities have succeeded in being.

The unity between the inner and outer life which we see most characteristically in Russia, Italy and Germany ostensibly owes its force to their respective dictatorships. But this is only instrumental. The dictatorship becomes a possibility when the mood of a people will pay a great political price for the healing of the stress between its inner and outer life. It has succeeded precisely because it did not attempt to make a new ideology to fit the external situation or to mould the social fabric to express the old consciousness. The dictatorships were erected and supported by a turn of popular consciousness toward an entirely new movement in which the inner and outer life were at one, and both different from the old. The Russian revolution showed less expression of a popular consciousness than the later developments of Fascist and Nazi totalitarianism. But it forced a change of social structure and proceeded at the same time to make a 'communist man' of the individual person,

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not only in his social behaviour but also in his deepest motive. That is the ground of the Communist hope (however illusory we may judge it in view of recent tendencies) that eventually the State may be allowed to wither away leaving men spontaneously of the Communist stamp. The propaganda for bringing about this correspondence between man's own impulse and the form of his environment was no mere exhortation to be something, but a revolutionary practice supported by a philosophy of the nature of reality. As G. Lukács says 'When the proletariat by means of the class struggle changes its position in society and thereby the whole social structure, in taking cognizance of the whole social situation, *i.e.* of itself, it not merely finds itself face to face with a new object of understanding, but also changes its position as a knowing subject.'

Fascism bridged the gulf between ideals and practice by making ideas the function of political action. It was thus farther removed from the cultural tradition of Christendom. It achieved unity by the subordination of thought to the idea of the nation as the supreme category of action. Mussolini said in one of his speeches, 'We have created a myth. This myth is faith, a noble enthusiasm. It does not have to be a reality; it is an impulse and a hope, belief and courage. Our myth is the nation, the great nation which we wish to make into a concrete reality.'

The longest step in transforming man's conception of himself to correspond to the accompanying re-creation of social consciousness and order was taken by national socialism in Germany. Professor Bergmann proclaimed the Third Reich the expression of the 'new humanity', and his most popular discussion of the thesis of a German national Church in open revolt against Christianity is entitled *Das Bildungsland der neuen Menschheit*. And Dr. Rosenberg wrote: 'It is the first task of education . . . to strengthen those values which slumber in the depths of the Germanic being and which must be carefully cultivated' and 'the race-bound national soul is the measure of all our thoughts, aspirations of will and deeds, the final criterion of our values'.

There are certain features common to all these titanic examples of totalitarianism which make them instructive in dealing with this problem of a conflict between the inner and

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outer life. Practically they unite the two by subsuming all social and human activity under the political. Man's supreme significance lies in his citizenship. His art, science, morals, religion are judged good or bad in so far as they minister to or hinder the absolute supremacy of political power. The State's interest is the final arbiter of all men's actions. But this practical conception could never have succeeded in generating the mass following that it has if there had been only hortatory injunctions to subordinate everything to the supreme political end and the plentiful oppressive coercion that has accompanied these developments. This State absolutism is a going concern because it is offered as an instrument for implementing a much deeper force which is not so much imposed as evoked—the hunger of the soul of the man of to-day which has been starved by the agnostic empiricisms of secular humanism. It claims the total loyalty of man and in so doing restores to him the sense of being purposive and recovers for him the consciousness of social solidarity. But on a still deeper level, these tendencies give human beings the conviction of being significant as conscious agents in a process that is in the sweep of the trend of all things. This effect is gained by the shutting out of much of reality or by the distorting of it. But it is a tremendous bait to the lacerated soul of modern man, torn from his spiritual and cosmic roots, to be pushed back into what he is taught to conceive as the purposive process of reality as a whole. For the Communist the classless society is the goal of history; for the Fascist the national deed has the force of a deity that generates and judges men's actions and thoughts; the German Nazi finds himself the bearer of a racial destiny that is the meaning of existence.

IV

No attempt in the name of the Christian faith to bridge the chasm between the inner and outer life dare oppose these secular experiments merely on the ground that they are totalitarian. The Christian message for this problem cannot be uttered as a plea for liberty from the oppressiveness with which they operate. It can rightly and effectively speak a word of

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judgment which would condemn them as false because their totalitarianism operates on a false plane. They are false both to the reality of human nature and to Christian ends not because they visualize the human being as a unified person finding his significance in one co-ordinating and living actuality larger than himself. They are false because in fact neither economics, nor nation, nor state, nor race can ever be the absolute reality to which all others are relative. The Christian answer to the same problem does not dismiss totalitarianism but insists upon its being inclusive—that is, true to the facts of human nature and its links with what is beyond nature and history in the eternal world.

If the inner and outer life are to reach some kind of unity without truncating man to fit the demands of a secular totalitarianism, it can be done only through a supernatural religion. Such a presentation of the Christian religion would, like the false totalitarianisms of to-day, begin with an affirmation of the nature of man and existence. But it would proceed from the original gospel to affirm man as both from beyond and in history, with his roots and destiny in the eternal world and the sphere of his eternal responsibility in the temporal. It would insist upon 'the primacy of the spiritual' in the sense of a dimension that gives all human activities their functional place in relation to the only eternal concrete reality, God. It would from this basis go on to declare the order of secular activities which minister to that spiritual end as the sphere of the moral will. That is to say, it would make judgment not first upon the fidelity of man's motives or conduct within the sphere in which he finds himself, but upon the place that sphere holds in the total life of the community. For only when the order is natural in this sense, that is, congruous with the nature of God, man and the world in their essential truth, can the question of the right motive and conduct be genuinely raised.

Such a recovered fullness of the Christian impact upon the world would of course involve much more than a change of mind as to the object of Christian judgment. It would as essentially require recognition of the action of God as a redeeming power wherever the true nature of human need is acknowledged. A recovered reintegration of the spiritual and secular

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aspects of life would spring from the gospel as primarily an affirmation of what is. The natural order of things becomes then not something presumed to exist but something requiring restoration by the power of redemption, which is the kingdom of God. The kingdom becomes again conceived not as the one far-off divine event, or as merely another name for the best in man, but as a present transforming force acting in the temporal order from beyond.

Thus can be recovered for the Christian faith just those features men are illusorily seeking in the modern paganisms. The true 'freedom of the Christian man' is upheld not as mere liberation from something, but as a fact based upon the truth that his being a spiritual creature is not exhausted in any or all of his worldly relations. That total loyalty which he craves to give is to be offered not to a Moloch of secular might but to the kingdom of God. For that kingdom draws him not away from responsibility in his historic setting, but gives him his warrant for acting in it. When the kingdom of God is known again as a power that reorders the social relations of man by bringing them back to the natural state, then the problem of the conflict between the inner and outer life becomes manageable. With that achievement Christians can begin to talk with reality about the religious responsibility for world order.

VIII

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In order to discover the proper application of Christian faith to the affairs of the world it is quite inadequate to present it in terms of moral ideals. The growing critical situation confronting the Christian Church confirms that judgment against a religious outlook which is exclusively moralistic. It is seen in the increasing difficulty of addressing the Christian conscience with conviction. Most of the slogans of the liberal 'social gospel' have become unical, and such catchwords as fellowship, service, sacrifice, have the effect of making one stifle a shriek of spiritual pain when they reach the ear of Christian realism. It will be a calamity, however, if the moral zeal which has been induced by the message of social righteousness should be abandoned for a purely apocalyptic theology. This can only be avoided by the formation of Christian consciences upon a sounder basis than that underlying the outlook which saw the problem as one of 'applying Christian principles' to social living.

I

The fact is that we cannot address the conscience with any sense of reality because our social ethic has been too much a hard-beating of the moral drum without a corresponding plan of campaign, a knowledge of the territory to be occupied, and an understanding of the nature of the Christian army. To drop the military metaphor, we have assumed the conscience to be complete in form and only defective in strength. A strong emotional impulse has therefore been generated in order to fortify the conscience supposed to be lacking in power. But because there was no equivalent growth in intellectual clarity there was

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no increase in internal freedom. A heightened sense of how men ought to act without that access of internal power which comes from a renewed outlook upon existence has produced a sense of psychological frustration. Many Christians are therefore turning to a pure salvation doctrine and an accompanying pessimism about the world. That is the nemesis of making appeals to the conscience without any effort at the formation of consciences. Too much has been put upon the mere will to act christianly, and the conscience has been assumed to see its way clearly by virtue of simple Christian profession.

The situation of the Churches which comes of this inadequate moralism was seen very clearly in the results of the Conference on Church, Community and State at Oxford, 1937. There was fairly strong unanimity about the kind of conduct which would reflect the faith in action and about the extent to which our civilization does violence to Christian standards. But there was, of course, wide divergence about dogma, that is about assumptions as to the nature of existence. And there was also a sense of weakness with regard to practical action in the world.

Behind the Christian question of the *ought*, there is the Christian question of the *is*; and in front of it is the Christian question of the *how*, which is the question of action or power. It appears from the periods in which the Faith has really been formative of civilization, and also from the momentum of the Fascist and Nazi movements to-day, that power is induced by conviction as to the nature of existence and that such conviction alone can vivify the moral impulse. Christian witness is weak in the matter of power because it is weak and divided in the matter of dogma, in spite of strong feeling on the ethical question. In order, therefore, to recover for the Christian conscience its proper power, we must cease to put too much upon its moral sense without an adequate intellectual illumination. In brief, the formation of consciences requires the remaking of the Christian mind. Perhaps this involves a recovery of a Christian metaphysics; it certainly demands a refurbishing of theology. We are being pressed to this task by the counter-dogmas of European totalitarianism.

It was noteworthy that, when dealing with political and community questions, the Oxford Conference realized that

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secularism was morally at variance with the Church's conception of the good life, because it was rooted in certain secularized notions of the nature of existence. But when it applied itself to the economic order it got little farther than listing (as it did very well) the elements in the industrial and commercial world which affronted Christian values. Now, this lack of a Christian philosophy is bad enough in the political and cultural sphere; it is most serious however in the economic. For it is the disintegration of our economic relations, without any constructive alternative, which has sent certain communities to seek reintegration on a nationalistic and militaristic basis. Totalitarianism is the attempt on secular lines to put economic relations in their place in a scheme of life. The bewilderment of the Christian conscience in the economic order springs from failure to sustain a Christian scheme of life in the mind of nominally Christian communities. It has been thought that the economic order was a neutral affair or part of the natural order of things, and that it would serve Christian purposes if men did their moral best in their place in it.

Unless we can inform the Christian conscience with a Christian mind we must expect conscience to contract still farther out of concern with the world's doings and anticipate a growth of non-Christian philosophies which will, like Marxism and Fascism, attempt to put the economic life of man to rights in their own way.

At least two fundamental postulates of a Christian philosophy of existence are essential to the building of that Christian mind which will become the basis of the formation of consciences. One is the dogma of original sin and redemption. The other is the dogma of an essential nature of man, which implies a proper hierarchy of his activities. From this essential nature sin is continually deviating him, and yet its factual existence pulls him round by the pain of frustration to another position which on the plane of sinful living is an opposite error.¹ The lineaments of this essential *form* of the human being can be dis-

¹ I have developed this theme in connection with the antitheses of individualism and collectivism, rationalism and vitalism, transcendence and immanence, in a recent work, *The Religious Prospect*, (Frederick Muller, London)

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cerned by the natural reason, though its content and fulfilment can only be fully apprehended in the light of redemption. Now these two postulates, the theology of Grace and the theology of the Natural Law, the one held to without the other by orthodox Protestantism, the other jealously guarded in tension with the first in the Catholic tradition, have been spilled overboard by that liberal Christianity which has been most concerned to find a social application of the Gospel.

We are at the end of a period in which Christian faith has nearly lost the battle with secular interpretations of life because Christians have thought that conscience needed only moral aims. Its chance of regaining spiritual and moral initiative demands a renewed setting of Christian ethics in a dogmatic or philosophic context. That context will have to become the habit of mind with which the Christian approaches his moral problems. I can only offer here a few hints on the importance for such a habit of mind of the two postulates I have mentioned as fundamental in a Christian philosophy.

II

One of the consequences of understanding the meaning of original sin, when that understanding is a habit of mind and not merely a proclaimed doctrine, is that with it the Christian appreciates the magnitude of sub-voluntary evil. He knows two things. He knows, first, that man in this world has neither the perfect freedom nor the undimmed charity of the saints and the angels. While he knows that God's grace is real to those who believe, and that when accepted it enables man in a measure to realize that freedom and that charity, he knows also that there is a word of God about the better and the worse in the workaday world of the natural man and his public activities. But because he knows the first he holds firmly that the second is not to be confused with it, that the better and the worse among unredeemed, sinful and wayward men are not the same as the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan, though they are under God's law and judgment in another mode. He knows that the most pernicious and debilitating results have followed from the identification of the morality of

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social living as such with the supernatural values of the life in grace. It has led to a utopian idealism in social ethics which leaves all real problems outside it. In consequence it has earned the complacent encouragement of 'the powers of this world' and induced in the faithful a dispirited despair which sends them to pure salvation doctrine as the only Christian message.

In the second place, the believer who has won some insight into the meaning of original sin and the need of grace knows also that the extent of what is wrong in organized society is out of all proportion to the deliberately anti-social or defective behaviour of persons and groups in it at any one time. He knows the corrupting effects of the collective miasma of sinfulness upon the best intentions, the good motives and the altruistic actions of personal and corporate wills. There has therefore to be formed a Christian judgment upon the structure of societies, upon the mind of the community and the order of values it gives to its organized activities; for these things deprive even the best moral and heroic effort of its beneficial effect, even where they do not, as in the mass they do, stifle such moral and heroic promptings. The first question which the Christian mind will ask of a social order is whether its organization recognizes the moral frailty of man. In one sense, of course, all social organization implies that human beings do not live by charity and perfect freedom. There would be no system at all if they did—so the often-heard dictum that if you perfect men the system will right itself is an abstractly true and completely useless statement. It is a paradisaical picture falsely applied to our temporal existence.

But there are degrees in which social structures and conceptions recognize the moral frailty of man. In all types of society moral and spiritual effort is required in order to live well, in the Christian sense of that word; but in some—and our own modern communities are among them—too much heroism is required for the mass of men in order to live at all their purely natural lives. And in the societies which have made economic values supreme there is the further disorder of equating success with evidence of moral achievement. I know many good and successful business men who genuinely regard all who have not earned as much wealth and independence as

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themselves as morally sub-normal. The ability to make money depends, of course, upon a peculiar combination of qualities not all of which are morally admirable

The Christian mind with which consciences can be formed will then be aware how false it is to assume that to live a natural and rational existence demands the virtues of a heroic sanctity; though I am sure that wisdom requires society to accord a valid place to certain bodies of people who live a life of sacrificial consecration. But more important still is it that the Christian mind shall also be aware of that particular form of original sin which makes men elevate what they are good at or what the system compels them to do, into the rank of the absolute moral good.

One example of the confusion between the life in grace and the moral good in society is the threadbare controversy about the profit motive. Because of the havoc wrought in modern industrialist commercialism by making purely financial results directive of social organization, many Christian and humane critics have condemned the motive of profit as immoral. Its defenders, unconvinced of the validity of this charge, have falsely deduced that therefore there is nothing wrong with a society in which the main objective of individuals and business and the order of social values is the increase of money income. Here the Christian mind makes a discrimination. Knowing that there is a valid ethic for a world in which men are neither angels nor saints in heaven, it does not outlaw in the abstract the only two motives for human action, force and inducement. It does not condemn the profit motive as immoral. But it does—or it should much more than has been customary of late—declare that a social order in which the making of money profit inflicts vast social and human injury upon masses of men and spiritual injury to those who do it well, is under Christian judgment. This Christian judgment not only condemns such an order as contrary to the will of God for man, but insists that it can be changed without demanding a vast rise in the moral and spiritual achievements of the average person. The motive for change is in fact just the requirement that a social order shall be such that it enables sinful men to live together without depriving any or most of them of the basis of a natural physical and cultural life.

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In the organization of industrialist commercialism (not to use the term Capitalism which begs too many questions) it is not difficult to list, without stopping to trace their origins, a number of factors which make the conditions of earning money profits harmful. The first is the tendency for the profit-making activity at its higher levels to become, under these conditions, automatic and to grow at geometrical rates. Inequality as such is not the evil, but a scale of inequality at which the doctrine of Stewardship becomes unical. For the successful maker of large profits 'the administration of wealth', as M. B. Reckitt remarked many years ago, 'is not a stewardship, it is a dictatorship'. Then there is the impossibility of more and more businesses being content to make a steady profit; in order to survive they must increase its rate. This is the fruitful source of monopoly control. The other side of the picture is growth in the number of bankruptcies. Again another feature of disorder in social aims is the necessity, in order to make a financial surplus, of alternately exploiting the earth with ruthless irresponsibility and then birth-controlling its yield. As a final instance of a false social order which makes profit-making anti-social, we have to consider the extent to which the wages system and the profit system, as well as the subservience of government to money, make for an alarming growth of debt. Inequality becomes a social cancer at the point at which the majority in order to live and act have in countless ways to become borrowers from those who have the power to lend.

Behind the sinful behaviour of human nature at all times there are features of this kind in our society, which no race of good angels could turn to the service of human decency and well-being, and which are changeable without expecting the moral regeneration of mankind. To suppose, as what we are pleased to call our Christian mind with its Pelagian optimism commonly does, that any system can be the vehicle of the Christian or merely good purposes of men, is to admit that our social order and our Christian thinking take no account of original sin. T. S. Eliot has stated the converse of this in the political sphere: 'A sceptical or indifferent statesman, working within a Christian frame, might be more effective than a devout Christian obliged to conform to a secular frame' (*The Idea of a Christian Society*, Faber, 1939)

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The first condition for building up a Christian mind for the formation of consciences is therefore for Christians in the world to learn what it means to 'live under protest' It means something more than continual awareness that their moral best is always corrupted by sinful pretensions, as Reinhold Niebuhr is so necessarily and pertinaciously insisting. It means habitual recognition that a society, by the order of importance and power it gives to its organized activities, can spoil the consequences of the best ethical motives and make the result of the worst ones worse than they need be in a sinful world. The Christian 'living under protest' is living and acting in 'a disorder' of society, seeking to do the will of God for him in his particular situation, and with spiritual and intellectual protest in his mind against a bad frame which as a citizen and a man of faith he is taking his part in endeavouring to change. He will be on the watch always against slipping into the attitude which identifies what he has to do, the best he can do in his part of the frame, with the best that would be done in a better ordered world which will still be an imperfect one. Still more will he beware of drugging his conscience by the deadly snare of erecting the behaviour of his moral best in a bad frame into a scheme for saving the world, or regarding it as the one pure foundation of social well-being to which all other kinds of social activity must be made to fit.

III

The second main set of considerations which I suggest as necessary for the strengthening of the Christian mind as the basis of the formation of consciences comes under a heading which I call the recognition of the Natural Law. This is not a specifically Christian conception but it is one to which all social thinking overtly or blindly appeals at some point. But if it is not brought by the Christian mind into a conscious relation with the moral demands and spiritual affirmations of the Faith, it will inject itself in a pagan or secular form and raise an insoluble dilemma for Christian action in the world. In the history of Christendom the idea of the Natural Law has been restricted to certain problems which arose out of violations of

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it and therefore called for definition. It has therefore in the past been concerned with such things as the nature of political sovereignty, equality before the law, the family, prices and money-lending. In the medieval teaching the idea of the Natural Law was confined to things like these, because other things which would have been seen to come within its scope, if they had been attended to had not been forced into the intellectual consciousness by widespread departure from it. They were taken for granted. Partly because of this restriction, which was not corrected by an enlargement of the sphere of Natural Law thinking when new factors and complications entered into the situation from about the fifteenth century, a disastrous split occurred. Theology, especially in its Protestant forms, gave up the idea as unreal, and when the idea emerged from time to time in the secular sphere, as in the Fourteenth Amendment of the Federal Constitution of the United States, it had no integral relation to the Christian understanding of human existence and interest in it was limited mainly to the subsidiary aspect of 'the Natural Law', which is concerned with the safeguarding of 'Natural Rights'.

The recovery of a Christian mind, able to cope with the questions presented to it by the modern world, requires an understanding of the theology of Natural Law with a fuller content than was envisaged in the more restricted medieval universe of discourse. The development of this understanding is the work of a lifetime or two for a number of Christian thinkers who will resolutely refuse to dismiss all idea of Natural Law because of the contradiction of sin and the super-temporal nature of the Kingdom of God, and who will also refuse a secularized idea of the Natural Law in detachment from the theology of grace, after the manner of political utopias and liberal Christian ethics.

An organized social activity can contravene the Natural Law in three ways, nature being understood as that which appertains to the essential nature of man as well as of the universe. Firstly, a social activity may have a definitely invalid character. Everybody would be the better without it except the agents who get their living out of it. This category includes not only definitely immoral and socially revolting occupations, but also

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scores of despicable and trivial jobs the result of which nobody really wants but which many are cajoled or compelled into paying for I am thinking of many forms of advertising, pestilential salesmanship and the growth of a class of bosses and bureaucrats

Secondly, an activity may validly hold a healthy place up to a point, but when it becomes a major occupation in society it is both a symptom and a cause of social ill health. A most glaring example of this is what is rapidly becoming the racket of insurance, stimulated by clever fear propaganda and by legal compulsion. A moderate scale of insurance against risks may be a sign of social wisdom; on the present scale it is an indirect form of taxation on behalf of a growing class of people who can find no more positive function. It reaches its ridiculous conclusion when now 'in a state of war' businesses are invited to 'insure against peace'. And the exaggerated place insurance now takes is not explained away, but is made more dangerous, by moralizing it under cover of phrases like 'the gospel of insurance'.

Thirdly an activity, though valid, may violate the Natural Law by holding a place in the order of importance in society which does not belong to it as judged according to the constitution of man's essential being. Here I would include nearly every major department of economic life to-day. The primary economic function of extracting from the earth, its land, its mines, its oceans, the means of human welfare is now regarded as the menial lackey of the manufacture of technical appliances, and our social organization reflects this false order. It still more clearly reflects a further disorder in which the commercial and exchange activities of society gain advantage in the direction of social policy at the expense of the more elemental economic processes of handling and transforming material. A further stage of disorder is to be seen in assumptions and policy which give the interests of loan-finance power to veto the carrying out of genuine economic purposes for which there is ample material and human resource. Some inkling of this false priority is permeating certain political groups. But the full understanding of what is involved in 'putting money in its proper place' is a long way off. President Roosevelt, for example, could not meet the

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criticism that a policy of 'spending the country into prosperity' leads to an astronomic growth of public debt. Such a dilemma is evidence of violation of Natural Law, for it reveals a complete lack of correlation between what requires to be paid back in money terms and what must be paid back to the earth for continued yield.

I have indicated only a few cases which show that our industrialist commercialism is perhaps the most unnatural social order in human history. As it has been developed, the frustrations it induces have pressed men to ethical questioning of social conduct. But for all involved in any of these activities, out of their proper order, the more honest, conscientious, diligent, efficient, considerate and generous they are, the more glaringly obvious will the inadequacy of personal moral conduct in social life be made painfully clear.

Here again the growth of a Christian mind and a conscience informed by that mind will encourage the necessity and power to live and work under protest. The Christian must learn to do his moral best even in his place in a disordered activity, and to keep his mind and conscience aware that the order of social activities is false. If he takes his part in working for a more natural social order it will be with the readiness to acknowledge that this does not require the conversion of all men to the Christian ethic. The effort and perhaps the endurance necessary for success will make demands upon men which they are willing to endure for their natural good. But I think that we are so involved in socially unnatural disorder that, at this crucial turn in the history of man, we cannot detect its unnaturalness except in the light which Christian faith, with its point of vantage outside the natural life, can shed upon the world.

IX

VOCATION IN WORK

★

During the war the leaders of the Churches in England laid down Five Points for a recovery of social health. The fourth point states that every man should be able to consider his work as a divine vocation. I will here explore what this criterion means and what conditions are involved in it.

I WHAT IS A VOCATION?

In the rough we may say that a vocation is a work to which a man is called by God. But the fourth point of the prelates is both narrower and wider than this general conception. It is concerned presumably with that form of work in which men are employed for their own livelihood and in providing things and services for which the community pays them. Voluntary service and creative activity outside employment are not part of the problem with which the Five Points are concerned. Secondly, the criterion is clearly meant to be a test of conditions which affect not only the Christian workers, but all men, including many who have no religious convictions which would lead them to put the question in terms of a divine call to their work.

In fact it is well to be clear that it is only in a derivative or analogical sense that we can use the specifically Christian idea of 'vocation' as a test of value and meaningfulness in the work by which men get their living. The Bible uses the idea of the calling in both a strict and a secondary sense, but even the latter is a much more theological conception than the one this fourth point lays down as a standard.

In its strict theological meaning the 'calling', according to Saint Paul, is to membership of the Kingdom of God, and is

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part of the doctrine of justification (1 Th. ii 12). Such a 'call' induces a certain indifference to one's status in the kingdom of the world (1 Cor. vii. 20-4). For the most part, however, the New Testament, like the Old, uses the term for a summons to the individual man or people or Church to a particular duty which carries its own privilege and responsibility. But whether used in its purely soteriological sense, or in that of a life-task, vocation is held to proceed from God's eternal purpose. It has the note of divine authority and is independent of, and often opposed to, man's sense of fitness or inclination for the task to which he is called. It is no doubt because vocation has its origin in the unfathomable decree of God that the Church has never been able to lay down an unmistakable criterion of a vocation and that there is little guidance for finding one in the teaching of moral theology. Though the Church has rightly been shy of defining a vocation by any human tests, there has been a general Christian understanding of certain states of life as 'vocations', such as life in a religious order or the priesthood, and this idea has then been more widely applied, for example, to celibacy, or marriage, or some occupation demanding special renunciations, such as the mission field, nursing and dangerous public services. It should be noted that these 'vocations' represent not a call from idleness or evil-doing to work and well-doing, but a call from a normal good state of life to a special task that involves a restriction of valid satisfactions.

It is therefore a far cry from the idea of vocation as used in the Bible and in Christendom to the requirement that daily work should be considered as a divine vocation. I am not condemning this modern Christian usage; in fact I uphold it. But I consider that nothing but harm and confusion and fantasy can follow a neglect to appreciate that we are now stretching the idea of vocation to include something which Christian thought has not yet succeeded in handling under this heading.

II. THE HISTORIC BACKGROUND OF THE CONTEMPORARY PROBLEM OF WORK

The problem is not made easier, but more difficult, by the fact that the most serious attempt to develop a doctrine of 'the

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calling' for man's daily work, was made under the auspices of Calvinist Protestantism.¹ While this attempt must be saluted for its valiant intention, it has actually put us in a worse muddle, because Calvinism provided the strongest religious impulse, among others, for the growth of industrialist-commercialism, and it is this civilization which has produced a world where masses of men can find no significance in their work, even a human significance, let alone a sense of vocation. A diagnosis of the process leading to this result would take us too far afield. But Troeltsch's conclusion, that the contribution of Calvinist habits of thought to the problems of the commercial era is only an indirect and consequently an involuntary one, leaves the important point obscured. The point is that reliance upon a purely subjective principle, namely, the calling to man to be active in a process, without attention to the function of the process, leaves man with the impulse to intensify his activity as a pledged sign of grace without regard to the objective value of the result. Naturally, when the intense religious faith that marked the rise of the doctrine faded, men retained the psychic dispositions associated with it and unconsciously held on to a belief in salvation by activity.

However that may be, it is certain that we have little reliable guidance in the historic tradition of the Church for deciding what vocation in work means. The tradition is not therefore worthless. It is only in recent times that the question of significance in work has become acute. For the greater part of human and of Christian history men had a hard struggle with Nature; it could be said of the human race up till lately what G. K. Chesterton said of the housewife: 'I will pity Mrs. Jones for the hugeness of her task; I will never pity her for its pettiness.' Now it is rather the soul-numbing meaninglessness of much work activity that is in question. A new problem has arisen and it calls for Christians to bring out of their heritage 'things new and old' for a moral and sociological equipment to deal with it, in the same way as the Church's doctrines were drawn out of its basic experience to cope with heresies as they arose.

¹ For the idea of the calling in Calvinism, see E. Troeltsch, *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, II, and Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

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The tragic fact is that no Church tradition in the last two centuries has been effective in preventing the domination of life by economic motives. Christians have been content to morally sweeten the results. After the break up of the unstable medieval synthesis, in which economic life was kept in its more natural place, more and more of the mass of men lost any real emotional satisfaction in their employed work. This was fully realized by that queer genius Rudolf Steiner in the days of the last war.¹ Many of the more intelligent workers tried to find the satisfaction in a scientific or Marxist account of their distress which they could not find in the activity of work itself. Programmes were consciously embraced as policies for the cure of the evil, but on a deeper level they were espoused for the feeling of mastery in the intellectual and political sphere which they gave men, as a compensation for loss of the sense of mastery and significance in daily occupations. This fact, that men sought in theory and political movements what they missed in their work-life, accounts for the doctrinaire character of Marxism and other philosophies of workers' movements that claim to be total accounts of human life. When the inherent weaknesses of economic salvation doctrines were detected many turned to historic realities like Nation, or State, to biological realities like *Volk* or Race, or to naked violence and military might. Readers of P. Drucker will know how much the spiritual malaise of the work problem, and not only or most deeply the unemployment aspect of it, played in the rise of Nazism.²

III THE FOURTH POINT'S REQUIREMENT

After this brief review of the background of the problem, we can ask what is the intention behind the prelates' fourth point? It uses the idea of vocation in a wide sense as meaning a conviction of significance or value in work. There seem to be two tests for such a requirement. Either the work springs from the creative urge in man as a skill-hungry creature or it is given significance by the certainty that the worker is doing something socially beneficial. A task may be soul satisfying even when

¹ See his *The Threefold Commonwealth*.

² *The End of Economic Man*.

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personally irksome if it is known to be 'doing good', that is, making a contribution to the good life of the community. It is disastrous to romanticize and talk as if only creative work can be a vocation. These two valid motives in work correspond, in an analogical sense, to the two kinds of prophetic call in the religious sphere, as recounted in the Bible. Dr. Peck has pointed out that Jeremiah was called to the prophetic office by a kind of divine predestination which overrides his sense of unfitness. 'Before thou camest out of the womb I sanctified thee and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.' Isaiah, on the other hand, found his call in response to a particular spiritual need of his community: 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?' 'Then said I, Here am I, send me.'¹ The fourth point obviously envisages a society in which a man's occupation falls under one or both of these types of call. We may say, therefore, that this principle is a demand that a man's work should be something he could present as an offering to God if he were a believer.

IV. SOME CONDITIONS OF FULFILLING THE DEMAND

A full discussion of these is impossible here. I give a summary of what seems to me the main conditions, and then deal with what I believe to be the chief obstacle in the way.

The proletarian lack of status of the masses must be superseded by a condition in which the worker has an inalienable status in the community. Proletarianism means a state in which the man is not paid as a man, i.e. twenty-four hours per twenty-four, as it were, but as the source of so much labour, paid so much per hour and for so many hours, just as gas and electricity are paid for. Work in this case means only selling labour power. To effect the recovery of status for the worker a general and a particular change are necessary. The general one is that the distributive mechanism of money shall reflect real demand and productive possibilities. That is to say, the population's income will have to be proportionate to the results of economic activity, and not proportionate to the contribution necessary for the result, either in the form of energy expended or absten-

¹ W. G. Peck, *Return to Holiness*, ch. v, 'The Christian as Prophet'.

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tion (savings). The use of natural power from the earth, replacing human muscular energy, has radically destroyed the possibility of measuring the value of economic results by the amount of human energy expended. How far a restored status demands higher paid work or some income independent of work, or both, is a problem of social policy and not an economic one. But without this adaptation to the energy facts of the power age men will continue to multiply opportunities for economic activity for the sake of income, whether the result meets a real economic need or not. In so far as it does not, it is useless to talk of vocation in work.

The particular change referred to is that full achievement of a sense of vocation in work will come only with the disappearance of the division between two classes of producer, worker and owner, and the organization of all engaged in valid economic tasks in corporations or guilds to meet the real demand for their services. This requirement has a large literature and some historical experiments to its credit, which demand much more attention and further development.

While no one is so foolish as to say that all routine jobs are soul destroying and cannot be considered vocations if they are really useful, nevertheless many routine tasks in attendance on machines leave the operatives no energy after working-hours for creative or recreative pursuits or for normal healthy human intercourse. And where a balance between work and a real life besides work is upset, the idea of work as an offering becomes impossible. The natural man cannot *offer* what he is not free to withhold.

I would say further that the possibility of men feeling called to their jobs becomes more real as the community takes on a pattern which reflects the natural order in its economic pursuits. For our industrial-commercialist culture this involves recovery of a pattern in which use and nurture of the land takes basic place, factory production becomes a secondary asset; commerce and trade a convenience of third importance; and financial activities the most instrumental of all, serving, but in no sense deciding, economic purposes. That is the order corresponding to the nature of man as created.

Mr. T. M. Heron has rightly called attention to what he calls

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'the autonomy of the technical'.¹ By this he means that there is a right way of doing a job; it has its own technical law. And while this is not a moral or spiritual law, true religion has an obligation to stand by the man who really gives himself to a job which is the best he knows. Mr. Heron also points out that this right of the craftsman or technician is denied by practices which assume the autonomy of economic and financial considerations. Now there are alarming features of our economic practice which steadily deprive men of mastery in technique. This responsible mastery is strongest where men have links with certain parts of the material creation like the land, mining products, raw materials, and good machines. It most easily disappears where men manipulate and exchange instead of making and handling material. Where agriculture comes under the control of financial houses, who have only a business interest in the land, the vocation of technique is endangered if not destroyed, because the interests and mental dispositions of nurturing the land and of buying and selling are on entirely different levels. Some of our largest steel firms, which were for many years directed by real steel magnates with an interest in steel, are now merely the adjuncts of London commercial and financial concerns, and in their offices steel experts are more and more displaced by mere business seekers. On a different plane, a butcher of my acquaintance has been recently hurt in his soul because his firm has made him display and sell tinned vegetables as well as meat. 'You know, sir,' he said, 'I'm a butcher, not a tradesman.' In other words, there is a vocation to a particular trade which involves a technique in handling material as well as trading ability; but there can hardly be a sense of vocation for men to be traders *in general*. The drift towards a situation in which more and more men get their living by commissions on exchanging and moving things about, and still worse by trading in the money symbols of trade, is an unhealthy development which will have to be reversed if a universal sense of responsible and meaningful work is to be achieved.

¹ 'Vocation, Life and Work', in *The Guardian*, 10th April 1941

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V. THE CHIEF OBSTACLE

For the majority of men vocation in work will mean a sense that they are called to their tasks by a positive human purpose. That is to say, a man's task must be a socially useful one, useful not in the narrowly practical sense, but as denoting that others want the use of his services. Now, whatever social and economic policies will be required, there is one truth so fundamental that its application precedes all questions of policy and programme. It is that the validity of a work depends upon the real human demand for it, and not upon the fact that it provides its performer with an income. The platitudinous nature of this truism has been concealed from us for two reasons. One is that our culture has partly succeeded in keeping up its volume of employment by a growing number of ridiculous and redundant activities, activities that are of no positive or social use; the world would be no worse and a lot better without them: they are practised because their agents have to insert themselves into the stream of money income somewhere, and the community has to be persuaded, cajoled, frightened, or induced by social snobbery into paying for them. This is called overcoming sales resistance. And the most alarming feature of this dis-health is the impossibility of getting any form of economic activity condemned, if it can be shown to employ a population. Suppose that a sufficient public opinion could influence government to stop nickel and iron-ore and petrol being exported to a likely aggressor nation, or investments for its industries, the country concerned would have to face the fact that this would lower its opportunities for employment. If this were to become a boon instead of a disaster, the internal economy of the producing countries would have to be altered. Suppose further that we gave our technicians real scope for their God-given gifts and expected them to make good, durable clothes, buildings, and machines, instead of things that wear out quickly and have to be replaced, we should have to find a way of giving the population economic security with a smaller amount of activity. In brief, if the character of work is to be considered primarily as a means to provide work and income tied to work, then bad and wasteful work is the way to do it.

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The second reason for our failure to face this elemental problem on its proper scale is that every modern community has been concerned with an 'unemployment problem' which has taken precedence of all others. And so long as our politics and economics do not review the whole question in terms of physical and human realities, so long as they simply try by different kinds of administration to mitigate the tragic human sufferings of unemployment by 'making more work', just like that, so long will talk of vocation in work be unreal. A highly industrialized Europe has now got what it asked for, namely 'more work', by rapid destruction in war. And if what we have been used to think of as 'full employment' is the only condition of economic security, it should be considered whether war and slave-states on the German model are not the only way to do it. Communist and Nazi economics represent only a later state of the problem of capitalist industrialism, and are in no fundamental sense a reversal of its unconscious aims. The war has come as a sort of demonic cure for the false problem we have all set ourselves—full employment. And the post-war situation will, as soon as the wastage begins to be made good, press us to rediscover the meaning of economic purpose.

The vocation of the worker can only be found in terms of performing a task as efficiently and qualitatively as well as is humanly possible. Society must make its arrangements so that this purpose is not expected to fulfil the contrary purpose of making work.

It would be a good exercise for forming the right frame of mind if we ceased to be surprised that we have an unemployment problem, and brooded on the extraordinary fact that men have to work so much harder in peace-time with all our productive skill than men had to in the fourteenth century, allowing for the fact of the increase in population and our higher standard of living.

Half a century ago Nietzsche described a community in which vocation in work was a real possibility: 'The artisans of the South are not industrious because of acquisitiveness, but because of the constant needs of others. The smith is industrious because someone is always coming who wants a horse shod or a carriage mended. . . In a fruitful land he has little trouble in

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supporting himself; for that purpose he requires only a small amount of work, certainly no industry.' I give this quotation not as providing a model for our future, for that would be a foolish rejection of the real benefits of applied science, but as illustrating two indispensable conditions for a society in which men could work with a sense of vocation. The first condition is that, whatever their place in the economic process, men must not be too far removed from the biological basis of their existence in the land, for they cannot exert any social or economic pressure for the maintenance or improvement of their status, if that is going to upset a vast and complicated net of transactions by which they get food for their bodies. The second condition is that vocation in work requires a set of social relations in which a job looks for the man and not a man for the job.

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Whoever would lend a hand in the remaking of Europe before all things it is necessary that he understand rightly what it is that needs remaking. He must learn what are the elements which form the stuff of Europe as a cultural unity and distinguish them from the social phenomena which have become attached to it in the course of history, sometimes as preservatives, sometimes as corrosive poisons. He has to discriminate between the influences which may appear to threaten the whole body and those which in fact only attack the excrescences, between the forces which are thought to sustain the vitality of the organism itself and those which actually only defend the parasitic out-growths. In brief, he must know in regard to which factors in the matrix of contemporary civilization he has to be positively and vitally conservative and in regard to which others his attitude must be critical and destructive. To steer clear of a monistic upholding of all things as they are out of conviction that society is an organic growth, and on the other hand, of an equally monistic revolutionary attitude which springs from mistaken confidence in the power of the analytic reason to remake *de novo*, requires a peculiar set of qualities. Such a qualification demands a rare combination of historical objectivity with a sympathetic insight into the struggles of thought and action in which men are engaged to-day. Too often our guides through the contemporary scene either draw all the items of their knowledge, unconsciously selected, into the service of a polemic 'either-or' attitude or else they stand quite apart as erudite spectators from the rough and tumble of the actual field.

There is no one in England who combines a real feeling for

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the meaning of contemporary issues with the historical and cultural insight of the scholar to such a pre-eminent degree as Christopher Dawson. It is the author of *The Making of Europe* who has also helped us most to see what is involved in the re-making of Europe. This assertion of mine makes two assumptions. One is that Europe is still a cultural and spiritual fact. In spite of the threat to its continuance made by tendencies to cosmopolitan commercialism and by the rivalry between rationalistic and vitalistic secularism in vast political array, the continuity of European civilization has not been entirely snapped. Even the movements which oppose it are the perversions of strands in it. There is no other cultural and spiritual force which can be the sustainer of a renewed civilization. This assumption I take for granted, and it underlies the whole of Dawson's work. The second assumption is that by a regenerated and conscious return to the roots of European culture it is possible to bring about a new florescence of civilization, even if—perhaps only if—the ground is covered with the debris of its most recent growth.

Dawson's literary output is represented by two phases. From the publication of *The Age of the Gods* to that of *Medieval Religion* he has addressed himself to uncovering the religious foundation of civilization in the West. His two last books *Religion and the Modern State* and *Beyond Politics* take up the problem of its break up and the possibility of its re-creation. *Progress and Religion* and *Inquiries into Religion and Culture* bridge over the two phases.¹ In this article I am seeking to give an assessment of the second inquiry as made by him in his last two books, especially in *Beyond Politics*. (January, 1939)

While asking what place Dawson takes in the situation of the moment some hidden prompting has brought up to my mind two other figures who make possible some kind of comparison. I think first by way of contrast of Dawson versus Spengler. Both have drawn upon vast stores of knowledge in the cultural history of the race in order to offer a finger-post to our present distracted generation. They have a common concern with the flatness and loss-of-nerve of an epoch marked by what Spengler

¹ The order in which I have listed his major works is a logical and not a chronological order. All are published by Sheed and Ward

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calls 'the second religiousness' and with the Caesarism that is its counterpart. But here the resemblance ends. Spengler uses his diagnosis in support of the Caesarism while Dawson sees in this the uprush of elemental forces which can be transcended by an effort of human enlightenment and responsibility. Moreover, Spengler's array of historical learning is marshalled with pretentiousness and is pushed and pulled in the service of stoical submission to historical predestination, while Dawson's modest offer of guidance emerges naturally out of wisdom matured by ingenuous effort to understand what has led up to the present.

It is, surprisingly perhaps, the prophet Jeremiah who comes to my mind when brooding on possible parallels to Dawson's contribution to the problem of his own time. Not that there is anything gloomy about Mr. Dawson, as this comparison might suggest to those who misleadingly know the prophet only as the symbol of ruin; nor, of course, has Dawson's scholarly urbanity any of the fierceness which struck terror into the hearts of those who heard the Old Testament seer. But there is a close affinity between the problem and the answer in their respective messages. Both are speaking to a nation assured of its own good standing with God and incredulous of any prediction of judgment. Both insist upon the need to disengage the hidden resources of religion from its external entanglements, especially its stifling connection with the State. Both see the coming destruction of the secular order, and teach that its only power of rejuvenation lies in religious faith which has its roots elsewhere. I will not strain the parallelism by trying to find analogies to the liberal democracy, the Communists and the Nazis, which provide Dawson with so much matter for discussion, in the Israel, the Babylon and the Egypt of Jeremiah's vista. What is probably the most arresting coincidence is the confidence with which each for his own generation knows what must be given up or helped to die, because he knows what must be kept or recovered and built up into a new structure.

Dawson's thought has a wide and deep foundation, and in his latest work he brings it to bear upon the microcosmic problem of England to-day. His historical studies firmly established the two general truths of the basis of civilization in religion and the roots of European culture in the Christian Faith. His more

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recent work consists of a diagnosis of the forces which are uprooting that culture, and of an examination of the possibility of its renewed growth by access to the springs of religious vitality. Apart from the unique quality of this equipment of his, there is a further reason why *Beyond Politics* should be read, marked and inwardly digested at this moment by all Englishmen with any public influence, and especially by those who figure as 'religious leaders'. While nearly everybody is sheltering behind the international smokescreen and saying that we cannot do anything about our home problems until foreigners cease to be so tiresome, Dawson calls attention to the strains within the national community. Though it is not explicit in his writings, he has a sound sense that the 'horizontal' conflicts of communities spring out of the urge of States to seek relief from their 'vertical' disorders by changing their external relations. There is no doubt in my own mind that it is only because England is itself a diseased society that it finds that the threat of war sustains certain institutions and habits in decay by inducing an ephemeral community impulse which it cannot generate by positive achievement in peace-time. For this reason it is unable to speak the genuine word of appeasement to the rest of the world. I therefore salute every effort, like that of Mr Dawson, to elucidate the conditions of a revitalized national community.

England, in Dawson's view, is in some ways a victim of the same tendencies that are destroying the configuration of European civilization, and in other ways its situation is its own. The secularism which has given terrestrial goods the value of the eternal has bitten into the English ethos as deeply as elsewhere. We are worse off than the rest of Europe in that the disruption of natural and organic community has been carried further here by the rationalistic and atomistic conceptions which accompanied an era of predominantly commercial values; and England has not yet made its own revolution against its recent past as continental peoples have done. On the other hand, we are a little better off than our neighbours on two accounts. We still have a faded sense of being a Christian nation, for, as Dawson shows, although the Coronation of an English king in a religious rite cannot be taken at its face value, it signifies an

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attenuated reality which has not completely disappeared, and which prevents it being mere organized hypocrisy. Then we have a liberal tradition which, because it is an inherited attitude rather than a conscious theory, provides us with a real and special opportunity for constructive leadership in the world struggles of the time.

Beyond Politics deals with the question whether it is possible for England to carry into the future its tradition of liberty while recovering a real community life, when the religious faith which once animated it is now a sectional interest, and when other peoples are seeking to re-create it on a basis of secular religion and the suppression of freedom. This is not merely a question of saving the English from things they do not like, but is in fact the question whether in its unique situation it can recover in a measure the total values of European culture, whereas every movement in the recent past has been trying to recover one or two elements by destroying the rest. Dawson's method is to analyse the forces which go to make up the modern situation, then to describe the specific features of English society, and finally to show the religious significance of this whole cultural problem.

He makes perhaps his most valuable contribution by resetting the problem of Europe in terms of much deeper import than is reached by the current propaganda thinking in terms of Democracy versus Dictatorship, Capitalism or Socialism, Communism or Fascism. Such antitheses arise out of division, in one and the same sociological ethos, of tendencies striving to achieve some human values in a mass society which has lost the meaning of human life as a whole. And strangely enough it is the epoch which adopted the label of 'humanism' that has so impoverished man's understanding of himself that the human world is divided into camps, each fighting for one element in the truth as if it were the whole. The severance of man from his eternal and spiritual roots has left his life, not a self-contained human whole, but an alternating swing from one false absolute to another. The final dissolution of the conception of man as an organic whole with its centre in the super-human spiritual realm has made of modern society a mechanical and inhuman monster. It is the wriggles of this atomized and

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disintegrated mass man which Dawson delineates with a masterly combination of idealism and understanding. With the disappearance of an order of life as assumed in the diffused consciousness of men, there arrived a period of anarchy in the collective activities of society. The economic and cultural interests achieved independence of any philosophic mother and unconsciously gave themselves into the service of a rationalistic, industrialized, commercialist and mechanistic secularism. The disruptive influence of this uprooted mass civilization was masked by the belief in a pre-established harmony which under the name of 'Progress' Dawson has so cogently analysed.¹ And one of the main theses of *Beyond Politics* is that the State had therefore to abandon its specifically political function of coordinating functions which affect the skeleton of social organism and to attempt a reinstatement of unity in human life by drawing all other activities into itself. But in order to do so it ceases to be properly political and merges itself with the economic and cultural and, in the later stages, with the religious activities of society. It renounces specific concern with, as it were, the anatomy of society and embarks upon fulfilling physiological, psychological and spiritual functions. Dawson traces the steps by which politics have sought to re-establish unity not by a superimposed external control, but by invading the soul of man and making of him a psychologically adaptable unit in the secularized community-nation.

It is at this point, where the spiritual centre of human existence is claimed exclusively for the purposes of a unitarian nation-state, that these tendencies conflict most deeply with the demands of the Christian Faith. Whether or not attempts are made to cajole or mould the Church into becoming one of the organs of the State, the fatal step is taken when the religious springs of life are diverted to the ends of mere social power. Here again Dawson's gifts for discerning the deeper issues behind the polemic façades show that the religious aspect of this question is not fundamentally a Church and State problem, but that it is this only because underlying it is the struggle between secular community-religiousness and spiritual religion with its tension of eternal and temporal elements.

¹ In *Progress and Religion*.

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In Dawson's historical analysis it is the duality of Church and Society which has been one of the toughest guarantees of freedom from an omniscient political power. And, therefore, at a certain stage in the totalitarian drift this duality has to be suppressed, religion and politics becoming one thing. The exaltation of the national-community life into the absolute end of all human activity has thus been encouraged by the weakness and subjectivism of much modern Christianity. Spirit, like Nature, abhors a vacuum. So the void created by the agnostic empiricism, which has served the humanist epoch as its only workaday faith, leaves a hunger in the soul which in one sense welcomes an all-embracing political and cultural religion. Many who do not take easily to secularized religion will swallow it for the sake of the relative unity of the inner and outer life which totalitarianism gives. This danger is particularly strong where religion has become sectarian. 'Human nature [writes Dawson] needs a holy community, and though this need finds satisfaction in a true Christian Order, it does not find it in the sect or the chapel which was all the nineteenth century offered to fill the void left by the secular State. Hence, granted the scandal of Christian disunion and the failure of the Church to inspire and mould the subordinate categories of social life, it was inevitable that men should seek satisfaction elsewhere, in a community that was wider than that of the sects and deeper and richer than that of the secular State.'

An important aspect of this religious defect which fosters the uprising of secularized religiousness is brought out by Dawson at several points and deserves fuller elucidation than he has yet given it. It is that the influence of Christianity to-day is ideologically weak even where its moral influence is still active. Especially among English-speaking Protestant peoples religion is treated as 'a kind of social tonic that can be used in times of national emergency in order to extract a further degree of moral effort from the people'. This 'merely heightens the amount of moral tension without increasing the sources of spiritual vitality or resolving the psychological conflicts from which the society suffers'. I would like this statement in its completion photogravured in the mind of every Christian pastor who writes to *The Times*, and of every candidate for the

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ministry of religion before he embarks upon his ethics course, for the ineffective moralism which it exposes not only deprives public Christian pronouncements of any illuminating power, it also mars innumerable sermons on the problems of personal living. The defect is perhaps most clearly put by Dawson in *Christianity and the New Age*, where he says that its social effect 'is to create an immensely strong moral motive for action without any corresponding intellectual ideal. It is a culture of the will rather than of the understanding—a purely ethical discipline which neglects intellectual and aesthetic values'. In other words, a religion which has only a feeble word to say about what *is*, however loudly it speaks about what *ought to be*, is bound to be overridden by 'ideologies' whose power comes from their dogma of the essence of human existence.

Now, though the tendencies to make the community the source of all human values, including religious ones, mark the final consolidation of totalitarianism, the prior and most obvious steps in this direction are taken in other spheres than the religious. Dawson definitely dates the death of the liberal State by the merging of economics and politics. Then there is the whole sphere of intellectual, literary and aesthetic culture to be drawn into the totalitarian net. In this cultural sphere, Mr. Dawson implies, religion has a stake, for to make all man's mental, artistic and creative activities subserve only the intents of social consolidation, is to storm the citadel of the human person, it is to put over the spiritual sphere other powers which on a religious valuation are a means but not the definition of the good life. Christian believers are as much concerned when the order of culture and politics is reversed, as when the order of spirit and culture is inverted in the unconscious valuations of society. Dawson does not put it just in that way, but his conviction that the order of life as a whole is a religious problem, is the ground of his anxiety that what is positive in the European Liberal tradition shall be saved from extinction. The essence of that tradition is that man, by his essential nature, has purposes which are inherently superior to purely political purposes, and its embodiment in political idea and social structure is the means of preserving that order of life against the forces which continually threaten it. To uphold that tradition to-day is a

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task which especially devolves upon England. Dawson's treatment of the problem and the opportunity of England is of supreme importance, for it is in this matter that the most vociferous verbal 'defences of Democracy' succumb to unreality out of a false picture of the English situation and a false contrast between it and the conscious totalitarian experiments abroad. Because I believe that Dawson has stated the essentials of the task of England more truly than any other single writer, I do not hesitate, after summarizing his statement, to indicate two matters in which his thought stops short, as it seems to me, of its full usefulness, namely the place of the economic factor and the proper attitude of the Christian mind to the problem.

The menace to liberty and therefore to the primacy of spiritual values in totalitarian movements operates, as Dawson shows, by stages which are not reached or traversed in the same way in all places. The tendency as a whole is to draw economic life, culture, politics, and religion into one vast communal and centralized whole. The most obvious and preliminary step is for the political power to assume direction of economic policy and also largely of its administration. This has happened in Russia, in Italy and in Germany by deliberate revolutionary change. In England it has proceeded less consciously by day-to-day steps in a futile attempt to rescue economic life from the consequences of its own contradictions. On the Continent the cultural life of the people has also been more deliberately moulded by the ideology of the party in power, and in Germany the community spirit has acquired a definitely religious complexion. Here it is rather that a homogeneous mass-mind is being produced by the universal influence of the press, the cinema and the wireless, by the flattening effect of predominantly commercial valuations in every sphere, and by the quality of our popular education. These forces, along with the hold of the characteristic immanentism of English religion, are giving our society a definitely totalitarian configuration, without the myths of class or nation or race which animate the regimes elsewhere. And in spite of the long tradition of freedom and voluntary service, these are in danger of being lost for want of a clear social purpose and belief in a positive future for the community which will enlist the creative energies of men.

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Belief in a future of endless industrial and commercial prosperity is wearing thin, both through its inherent meagreness as an end of life and through the obvious dilemmas in which a society with its pattern formed by that belief is involved. We are in as real a danger as other nations, so Dawson warns us, of succumbing to an overmastering purpose of mere social solidarity for want of a more ultimately human purpose animating our common life.

So the mission before English society is to recover a real sense of community which will call out genuine social faith, while preserving the freedom for which English life and thought has always been jealous. Dawson is fully alive to the difficulty of the task, knowing as he does how deeply the bases of all community have been shaken, perhaps even more severely in commercialized England than in those countries which have found a substitute basis in the object of their communal myth. There is one way in which it cannot be done, that is to go on repeating the superiority of democracy over totalitarianism. By sociological analysis and by historical illustration, Dawson makes it clear that democracy and totalitarianism are not social antitheses, but that democracy and dictatorships are variants of the same totalitarian idea, the real contrast to which is a liberal society. And a liberal society has been the special mark of England, where it has been associated with an aristocratic and not a democratic tradition. Further, Dawson drives home the supremely significant fact that the mainspring of this liberal society has not been ideas of individual freedom or 'abstract conceptions' of the rights of humanity, but the power of social functions in the national life to preserve their vitality and independence of the central Government. It has also meant that government was one function of the community and not its supreme organ.

The politicizing of economics was, according to Mr. Dawson, inevitable owing to the havoc of individualism and *laissez-faire*. He is not, however, prepared to see the culture of the nation swallowed up by the political Moloch. The one definite proposal to which his book leads is that there should be a voluntary, non-political organ for the preservation and enhancement of the cultural life of the community. The super-political aspects

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of the nation's life can no longer be left to the unorganized action of individuals, and yet it must be saved from invasion by the organized powers of the State and financial capitalism. The type of organization Dawson envisages 'would have to be completely free and non-official, since its supreme end must be to preserve the freedom of our national culture. It must find room for everyone who is not committed to a totalitarian ideology and who is loyal to the national tradition and to national institutions and ideals'. He sees the university and the public school as typifying the kind of organ required, and suggests that parties of ideas like the Action Française and the Fabian Society provide analogies.

Now, I consider this proposal to be of immense significance, based as it is upon conviction that the only safeguard against formidable political encroachments in every field is a recovered vitality in the functional aspects of the nation's life. It ought to be pondered, discussed and practically envisaged forthwith, for as T. S. Eliot has said: 'In times of emergency, it may prove in the long run that the problems we have postponed or ignored, rather than those we have failed to attack successfully, will be the ones to return to plague us'.¹ If a name is desired for such a cultural defence body, I would offer as a provisional one 'Friends of Civilization'. But certain as I am of this vital need I am as equally certain that it cannot be met by leaving the economic problem out of the purview. Dawson clearly sees that the liberal State is killed when the economic life, because it works badly, is drawn into politics. Government enters into business. But he seems ready to accept this as beyond recall, and hopes that the true liberal values can be sustained in the cultural field alone. To restore to the economic order its own proper activities which run on their own usefulness and vitality is as difficult, but just as possible, as the liberation of cultural activities. And the latter are in many ways conditioned by the former, as Dawson from time to time admits. It seems to me that he is a little too much of the sociological determinist in the field of economics, and a little too much of the Pelagian idealist in the field of culture. What is wanted is that those with auth-

¹ Article, 'The Idea of a Christian Society', in *Purpose*, September 1939.

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entic cultural aims shall make clear at what points their specific function is thwarted by ostensibly economic limits, but in reality by the rules of a commercial and financial system. Physicians, educationalists, architects and others, have already begun to do so in isolated protests. Then we also want an economic body of producers, designers, distributors and organizers to examine, with a mind for this purpose temporarily removed from the exigencies of making a living in the thing as it is, what prevents the nation using and enjoying the things it can make or their equivalent. Dawson correctly says: 'We cannot transform a plutocratic imperialism into a democratic community by the extension of Government control and more intensive bureaucratic organization.' No, but neither can we regain a healthy liberal society unless plutocratic imperialism is transformed into something else. The war has begun to transform it.

The key to that transformation lies not only with a cultural renaissance which could do no more than discover its artificial hindrances in economic falsehoods, but also and especially with the real economic interest which finds the assumptions of a culture based on commercial and money-lending values militating against the real economic job of producing and distributing where need calls and nature offers. There can be no cultural health where the economic bases of life are so artificial as they are in our city-ridden community with its straining after a recovery of overseas commerce for money tribute, when the facts of the present world have rendered a contraction necessary; nor where the natural order in which cultivation of the soil has primary place, manufacture next, commerce third and finance as the most instrumental, is almost completely reversed.

Dawson recognizes that the continental movements have been in a measure a revolution against financial imperialism and an attempt to return to a natural order of economic life—at of course a great political price. And it surely is the case that we must make our own revolution against it. If it can be done in the cultural field with the retention of free institutions it can be done in the economic. The mechanized mass mind is as great but no greater a handicap in the one case as in the other. Dawson says that reformers pay too much attention to eco-

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nomics and too little to original sin. Quite true. On the other hand it is original sin which makes some men erect their urgent needs into absolute values and others believe that their modes of control over others are in the order of nature. Men will be snared into taking too economic a view of things if the economic order is false to its essential purpose, much as a dyspeptic sees life in terms of the stomach. The economics of our pluto-democracy are really a form of moral government in the disguise of operating a mere mechanism; they forbid to men what in the order of nature and skill is available unless they undertake further effort on redundant jobs. Waste and its rationalization in war are its necessary assets. While the economic system is not true to its own economic purpose there is a violation of the order of life which will vitiate any attempts to restore a true order in the higher reaches of human existence. So I contend that there must be devolution of the economic life of the nation as well as of the cultural. This would enable politics to recover its limited task of defining policy instead of trying to rescue society by tying it together at the top while the foundations are loose.

The Church is the organ of the Kingdom of God and not of the Kingdom of Man. Dawson reiterates this truth over and over again. It is a necessary warning against utopian idealism which ignores the contradiction of sin and the need of divine grace, and also against the danger of the Church being drawn into the State as a kind of moral pump. And he insists that the Church can best serve the community by being the Church, with its own principles and its own laws which are not those of the visible world. The Church's business is not, any more than it is that of the State, to organize culture and certainly not economics. It is to testify to the spiritual ground of reality and minister the means of grace. 'A Christian is like a red rag to a bull—to the force of evil that seeks to be master of the world and which, in a limited sense, but in a very real sense, is as Saint John says the Lord of this world.' A Christian sees success and failure as Christ sees them and differently from the worldly orientated soul.

All this has to be said, but I think there is more to be said, and for not having said it Dawson, in places, gives the appear-

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ance of having succumbed to the apocalyptic and dualistic pessimism which has become resurgent through the influence of Karl Barth. There is a dualistic tension to be upheld, but it is not so much between the Church and the World—that is just a fact—but between the world-affirming and world-renouncing poles of the Church's life itself. So while we must reject the liberal Christian Pelagian hope of the Kingdom arriving on earth by an intensification of moral uplift and a fantastic extension of Sermon-on-the-Mount ethics to the publicly organized spheres of life, we must also hold on to the power and mission of the illuminated life in grace to discern the regulative principles of the natural and social life of man. When Dawson speaks of 'the failure of the Church to inspire and mould the subordinate categories of social life' this is surely what he has in mind. But this point is not developed nor is the correction indicated. I would suggest that the warrant for elaborating this necessary mode of Christian thought is to be found in the heart of Catholic theology itself. While the Gospel was given first as an offer of salvation, Saint Paul and Saint John soon discovered and proclaimed the identity of the Saviour and the Creator. The cosmic significance of the Christ became integrally associated with His redeeming aspect. The foundation was thus laid for the interaction of the theology of grace and the theology of nature in the Catholic tradition. And so was elaborated, with varying emphases, the relation between the gifts of illumination and power in the redeemed life and the power to find and apply the Natural Law in the temporal. I hold that in addition to its own specific task of ministering to men the requirements of their eternal salvation, the Church has the unique resources for declaring where the Natural Law is violated and can be restored in the historical order. The mustard tree of the Kingdom of God has its own roots and its own fruit, but it is also meant to shelter the birds which lodge in its branches. The world can never be perfected, though men can; but it is within the bounds and indeed the responsibility of Catholicism to utter a word of reclamation to the temporal order—not for its perfection but for its reconstruction. The world is always very evil, but probably our contemporary world is farther gone from a natural order than in any other period of history. This makes men's

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sinfulness more socially disruptive and its effects more 'lock-stitched' than they need be. Because the Church knows the supernatural roots and destiny of man, the Christian mind, we must believe, can engender a recovered sense in the community of the right order in its political, cultural and economic functions. The Papal Encyclicals on Social questions assume this, and I should like to see Dawson or some of those who have learnt from him give it a full theological and sociological discussion.

Dawson's work has made it impossible to try to grapple with the problem of recovering community with the catch-words of opposite parties in the same false universe of discourse. By recovering for us the true dimensions of our life he shows where the real alignments lie. In the conflicts that meet the eye, between interests and people and ideas, there is on each side a mixture of good and evil. The danger is always that the evils of both will combine to crush the good in either. Dawson has helped us more than any contemporary to see how to shift the battle from a horizontal to a vertical plane wherein the goods in both parties can combine to vanquish the evils. And whoever would secure the equipment of understanding necessary for this task must begin at the point to which Dawson has led us.

XI

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★

Ask you to accept this attempt of mine to close these proceedings, not as an effort to clarify the numerous questions which have been left in confusion, but rather as the last words breathed gently in your ear as you go to sleep—not in the hope that everything will be clear the next morning, but in order that things you ought to hear and have heard may now be brought out again, just as, after the processes of sleep, things that did not seem to matter before come back to you, either for deepening of your insight or for clarification of your understanding.

Let us now, for this last half-hour or so, try to look at Europe as a whole, instead of as something which we have split up into the various compartments in which its problems can be arranged. I can do no more than try to string what I have to say upon a certain thread, and the thread I have chosen is that upon which can be linked those things in our discussions which are of particular interest to Catholics, not in any ecclesiastical review, but as a relevant to the Catholic stake in what is truly human.

I

The first question which arises directly out of Mr. Christopher Dawson's paper,² and which we might look at again, is just why we are talking about Europe at all. Why are we interested in this particular grouping of humanity? Mr. Dawson gave us

¹ Review and summary of the discussions and conclusions of the Church Union School of Sociology, 1942.

² Published in *Christendom*, September 1942.

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strong grounds for believing that there was some sense in this procedure, and that Europe, in spite of all its conflicts and its different strata, is still a unity.

But in what sense is it a unity, and what was really behind Mr. Dawson's statement that that unity was created by the impact of the Christian Faith upon the civilized tradition of the West, which is fully one thousand years older than the Christian religion? I think it is important to look at that question again, in order to understand the nature of the twentieth-century revolution in Europe. The story seems something like this.

Christianity burst out of the chrysalis of the Hebrew Church-State where there was no division, as we have it now, between the priestly and the secular power. The Hebrew Church-State was a theocratic unity. But Christianity was, from the moment that it emerged, a universal individualist religion, with an assertion of the link between the individual person and the transcendent God Who is behind and above all the human groupings of mankind. Christianity, therefore, put man in an entirely new relation to those groupings which emerged from nature and history—the geographical distribution of mankind and the blocks of humanity which were thrown up by the history of the human race.

Christianity spoke *to* man *in* those historic situations, but it did not speak *to* them primarily *through* those situations—the situations of their race, their nation, or their class. Therefore, with the emergence of Christianity, Europe and the countries which were under the influence of the Early Church had immediately a new kind of problem—the problem of relation between the Church and each existing historic community in which it ministered. They were not one thing but two, and that has left Christian history with a perpetual problem, the tension of the two loyalties within each Christian breast. When, after Constantine, Christianity became a formative influence in the historical communities of the world, then we find that it welcomed and adapted the ancient ideas of a natural law which belonged to man as man, as distinct from his status and significance in a particular historic setting; and so these two things—the supernatural mystery of the Church and the super-

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national rational law of justice—were the two soils on which a new kind of unity was grown, a unity which overarched the bounds set by geographical, cultural, occupational and class circumstances.

Thus it came about that while Christianity provided a unifying force between groupings and unities with entirely different roots, it did so by introducing a tension of another kind, the tension between, on the one hand, the historic formations, nations and so on, and, on the other, the Church as the custodian of a universal common element in human life. So the problem which has dogged the Christian community all through its history has been that between, on the one hand, the Church with its participation in the realm of grace and love, and also, on the same hand, its sponsoring of universal norms of justice; and, on the other hand, the life of historical communities with their own historical and local development. This is the tension which we find expressed in all its phases throughout Christendom—the problems of Church and State, Church and Society, Pope and Emperor, National Socialism and the Confessional Church and so on.

I emphasize this fact, because it is impossible, without realizing its importance, to make head or tail of the twentieth-century revolution. The problem of disintegration to-day cannot be understood if it be regarded only as a combat between historic groups which make up the world, a conflict which Christianity has never completely overcome. We must take into account also the unsolved problems which must arise between the spiritual and temporal order within, and because of, these historic groupings. Without remembering that we cannot understand the emphasis which Mr Dawson laid upon personal liberty as being bound up with Western culture. Without that background, what he did say might look like merely a liberal tract!

The thoughts which Mr Dawson's paper expressed are based upon other things which he has said elsewhere, particularly about the guarantee which Christianity had given to the idea of personal freedom which rested upon the double allegiance of man in Christian Europe. That double allegiance never allowed one or the other power entirely to dominate

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man's life. The common faith which Christianity did introduce, and the common law which it sponsored and encouraged, was a Court of Appeal to which men could go, either against the decisions of the positive law or the decisions of a particular ruling power. It is this fact of a law *above* the decisions of ruling powers of Europe which provided the shelter in which could grow up the strong corporate, functional activities which made up Christendom—those of learning, of crafts, of states and nations, each with a peculiar difference of its own, which could grow in strength without setting about immediately to destroy one another.

Now that corruption has set in within the historical communities and associations themselves, neither the supernatural Church, nor the rational natural law, nor any other general truth about men, seems strong enough to override the internal parasitism evoked by the declining vitality of the community. The twentieth-century totalitarian revolutions are attempts to cure this disease by abolishing the duality of religion and society, and by restoring on a secular pattern something corresponding to the ancient Hebrew Church-State.

I think this helps us to understand what, at first sight, is a little puzzling: that the Catholic Church, particularly in the person of the Pope now upholds as something which every Christian everywhere must uphold, both the principle of the natural law and the fact of nationality, which have entirely different geneses in the human consciousness and seem to be rival principles.

The key to the puzzle is that they grew together. Nationality could only grow because it was sheltered by a general conception of man and his needs. Each national tradition in the Modern West has claimed to embody rather more than its predecessors the general truth about men. (Here we have one example of what is a fairly safe clue to understanding human facts: only when some things are settled have men freedom and power to deal with other things.)

That is why Dawson calls the period of national growth by the name of Europe, and a good deal could be said about the fact that the national creeds of the Modern West were not by any means a dividing factor. The influence of English thought

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upon France and, vice versa, of France upon Russia and Germany, and latterly of the Russian Revolution upon Europe, in splitting it psychologically in two, and now the influence of Germany upon the rest of Europe, dividing it morally into two great blocks—all that is evidence that Europe is, at one layer, still a cultural and spiritual unity.

The situation revealed by this disintegration of European culture is an aspect of the tragic nature of man. Man creates civilization, in a measure, to embody the expression of his spiritual powers, but as the special achievements of each civilization are made, they tend to be reached at the expense of the natural, common, universal factors in human life. So community is undermined, and that is perhaps the ground for the truth in the works of pessimists like Spengler, although he takes a cynical rather than a genuinely tragic approach to the problem of civilization, due to the fact that he regards man inherently and fundamentally as a beast of prey.

Now we seem perfectly aware that the corruption of European civilization, in its historic communities, has something to do with the impact of commercialization and industrialization, which have imposed a kind of interdependence which men are unable to handle or control, which unite men in a way farthest removed from the spiritual centre of their being. It has introduced conflicts first within and then, as a consequence, between, the areas of European life to a degree unknown before, bringing hitherto unsolved problems of unemployment and of how to distribute what can be wrought out of the earth, and it has left men without any roots in land, or region, or human setting. But we should notice that this is not an inevitable effect of the impact of technics upon European culture, whose community is strong enough to absorb it. In the industrial communities of this country, such as you get in the North, there is still a quite robust community life among the workers which is due to a combination of an artisan tradition and religious bonds, non-conformist and others. These men are not mass-men. The mass-men about which we hear so much are rather to be looked for in the clerk class characteristic of the suburbs of the metropolis and the larger towns.

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II

There were some considerations which emerged from the discussions and were left sharply in our minds, which a Catholic view of things enables us to survey with a definite outlook. But these are not things for which we can erect the signposts about which we heard in one speech; we can, however, put up some quite obvious notice-boards, with the words 'NO THROUGH ROAD'.

For one thing, no Catholic will believe that by having other kinds of units than the Nation-State in the economic or political sphere we shall come nearer to harmony. We are unable to accept the myth that interdependence moves man away from egoism. Every parent or church worker should know from his own experience that interdependence brings us no nearer harmony. As if Siamese twins, compelled to take the same Sunday afternoon walk, were any nearer to the understanding of Christian charity than those who could choose whether they go apart or together!

There is still a touching faith that somehow a supernational control might fall into the hands of those concerned primarily with human rights, who will keep that concern in the exercise of great power. There is only one condition in which regrouping of administrative powers will diminish the effects of egoism: namely, that such a regrouping does mean a more equal distribution of power. It seems to me evident that to put major and essential industrial forces at the disposal of a supernational body would mean a concentration of control in basic economic power such as cannot safely be entrusted to any one group of men.

So we are led to ask whether a certain balance of power in economics and politics is not a corollary of the Catholic knowledge of the sinfulness of man.

I must also comment on the idea of a balance of power which Mr. Voigt assumed to be the most likely guarantee of European peace. It seemed to many that he took too easily for granted that a restoration of the balance of power on the Continent could be contemplated, similar to the one which has given

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Britain her security in the past. That security was possible because it was Britain which operated to produce the balance. Britain had the effect upon European nations that Father House compared to that of a planet moving near to the earth and causing tidal waves, and then moving away again. Any talk about the balance of power in the old sense in which we, standing outside and tipping it one way or another, understood it, is unrealistic. Prof. Carr has said, 'Much nonsense has been talked in recent years about the balance of power. But the confusion of thought resulting from the attempt to brand it as a morally reprehensive policy has been less serious than the confusion resulting from the assumption that it is a policy which can be applied in all times and in all circumstances. The principal reason why Great Britain can no longer, consistent with her own safety, abandon Europe to its own devices and retire into a non-European world-order, dominated by the English-speaking countries, is that the balance of power in Europe has hopelessly broken down.' This does not necessarily mean the abandonment of any idea of a balancing power. It does mean the abandonment of it in a form which leaves Britain independently able to tip the scale whenever it suits her. It is probable that Britain will have to participate as one of the powers in the balance, in which up till now she has been an outsider.

There is nothing essentially wrong in the idea of a balance of power. It is in fact a consequence of Christian realism in a fallen world. In a sense, the whole legal system of a nation is an example of a balance of power, but that still leaves the practical difficulty of embodying it internationally. We have not, in that sphere, the communal sanctions for enforcing or maintaining the balance of power. The most likely chance of ever getting it depends upon the national communities approaching a balance within themselves, so that they become, if not self-sufficient, at least independent in the true sense of the word. They would not then require, for their own internal life, to expand at the expense of other people or to have these constant war-like outbreaks in order to keep alive and flourishing. The Catholic will not imagine that any success in overriding the nation will free the world from these dilemmas.

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III

I would remind you of a difficulty connected with the idea of a modern law of nations and an international authority ordering and enforcing it. When we make an analogy between the law in the National State and a law which would preserve a certain harmony between States, I think we sometimes forget that the law of the State internally is concerned with a great many other things besides merely restricting parties from coming into open conflict with one another. There are the safeguards against libel; against slander; you may not take another person's character away, you may not use undue persuasion; you may not use bribery; you may not now get more than your proper ration, and you must wait in queues for what you do get. Any serious thought about an International Authority for enforcing an international law must have something corresponding to all that, as well as machinery for preventing open conflict when it is at the point of breaking out.

Christians must not think that their religion gives them the means of evading these secular problems. It is fatal to assume that because the crisis of modern Europe is fundamentally spiritual, which it is, that therefore religion is that upon which the whole thing hangs. Religious people tend, when they hear things like that, to pat themselves on the back, and avoid looking at the fact that man's spirit is incarnate with his political and economic struggles. This is particularly evident in the German situation. It has been pointed out by Rudolph Steiner, in Peter Drucker's book, *The End of Economic Man*, and more recently in a book by Karl Otten, *Combine of Aggression*, in which he shows that the German situation is only a very extreme form of the crisis of the whole of the modern West, a combination of spiritual uncertainty and a profound faith in techniques and organization. Here is one quotation:

"This adulation of technique, of progress through ever-increasing speed of locomotion, this conception of "mechanistic rationalization", afflicted and still afflicts all sections of the nation with a process of infection and bewilderment. Yet of all

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European nations, the German is least fitted for such mechanistic despiritualization.

'This fundamentally rustic and ponderous, not to say uncouth and sectarian people, has been transformed, distorted, and falsified, within a period of less than one generation, with the most urban and, therefore, most collectivized nation on earth. A nation of sectarians, brooders, poets, queer-headed cranks and hair-splitters, was expelled into an American sphere, where nothing was known to it, nothing familiar or traditional, but where everything was factual, extant and mechanical.'

That is a picture of the combination of inner spiritual uncertainty and a touching faith in organization. It looks as if the Germans have gone drunk with a dose of what we have become hardened to through repeated and regular taking of it! Technics give opportunity to the horde spirit, freed from rational and moral restraints, to try to overcome its inner uncertainty by pursuing unbounded possibilities.

What are the chances of getting the German people and others who are dominated by the historical idea of law (the idea that history makes its own law) to believe in a common law of man and nations? They can only come to do so if we cease to make the democratic idea a cloak for economic systems out of which the democracies have done pretty well, and hope to go on doing so.

A book called *The Dual State*, by Ernst Fraenkel, has just been published by the Oxford University Press, in which is described the actual working of the legal system in Germany. The author calls it a dual one. The regime could not go on were it not for the fact that there is still a strong element of the older—what he calls the 'normative' State—and what we call 'common law'. This is, however, being steadily displaced by what has been called the 'prerogative law', the subordination of justice to policy. The question as to what are the chances of helping the German people to recover a conception of the common law is really a question of a race with time, because, as the war goes on, the Police State gets more influence at the expense of the Legal State and the Civil Service.

On the other hand, has the Western and Christian idea of

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such a law enough validity and force to become the ruling influence in Europe? Doubt about that lies very deep in the Central European peoples. There are doubts about it even in the democracies. What is the possibility of using the idea of a natural law as a basis for European concord?

The natural law as expounded in the Middle Ages—that is Christian natural law—confined itself to certain specific ranges of questions, mostly those in which there was a general tendency to violate it. It was concerned with things like priority of the family, use and abuse of sovereignty, justice in buying and selling, formulation of national law—all of which grew up in answer to specific problems and histories. It was never a blue-print of the culture of human life. Other parts of life worked pretty well, or did not give rise to more than practical problems. These things were conditioned and to some extent disposed of by the necessities of life, and the emotions were directed to a far larger extent than in the modern world by the rituals of the Church. There was no need for legal or moral law in those spheres.

But now, in the modern world, a great many of these things which were thus looked after, or looked after themselves, in the earlier ages of Christendom, have become disintegrated. Cosmic forces have lost their natural means of expression and have, therefore, been brought into the grappling for power either by defensive or aggressive means. All natural laws now look by comparison abstract and unreal.

The problem of Catholics to-day is to fill out the conception of the natural law by taking into account the various ways in which it has been violated by the modern world to an extent not possible before. It has to be confessed, however, that we cannot integrate life with the legal and moral conception of the natural law alone. We have to consider the relations and priorities in the economic and political and cultural spheres.

When Dr. Kullmann said that Western Christians have ignored the cosmic forces, and when he assumes this means that the West either despises or ignores them, I think that is a misleading statement. It is rather that Catholicism has never felt the need to deal with them, by setting up normative ideas, or thought a great deal about these elemental forces; but it has

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dealt with them in the Church's rituals, those, for example, connected with birth, marriage and death

Dr. Kullmann will indeed acknowledge the place that was given to these forces, and the way they have been guided in the cult of the Church. It is not really a responsibility of the Church to stimulate the cosmic forces in mankind, but rather to baptize them, and it is certainly true that the contrast drawn by Protestant writers between *Agape* and *Eros* has very often been stated in such a way as to suggest that *Eros* was not a subject for Christian baptism. Cosmic forces, however, are always there. The Church has built its ministry of grace upon man's participation in earth's forces, but the Church, in one sense, holds an anti-vitalistic philosophy of man, and this is necessary because the biological powers of man are most easily mistaken for the spiritual centre of his being.

We had magnificent evidence in this paper of the strong bonds in Christ being strengthened by the Christian community under persecution. It was also pointed out that the Continental Christians were united in upholding the rights of man as such — thus being something corresponding to what we mean by the natural law.

The Christian knows perfectly well that justice is not love, but it is an expression of love in the worldly spheres where relations cannot be personal, and where many relations have to be impersonal. He also knows that men cannot continue to be fair unless they are willing to be more than fair; unless they are willing to be moved by charity; that justice cannot be kept pure unless there is a body of people in the community who are living, or trying to live, by charity. This does not mean that natural justice cannot be a universal binding principle. There is such a thing as good politics and good economics, for all that they are not love in the full Christian sense of the word at all. Moreover, there is, at any rate, a conceivable perfection in politics and economics, although State, politics and all the economics of buying and selling are there because men do not live in the Kingdom of God. Nevertheless, they have perfection in their own sphere, even if that is the sphere of sinful man.

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IV

Finally we can recall the proper relation between the realm of grace and the temporal order in terms of civilization. It is with civilization that we have been concerned from the beginning, as we have been considering a Europe which is in a sense a spiritual unity, and which has produced something which we can look at as a civilization. Civilization is not the Christian community, because the Christian community is entirely a personal one in God. Nevertheless, it is the product of the Christian spirit, in which man achieves some measure of community with other men and things. Perhaps it is only because he is excluded from the Kingdom of God that he has to do this, but the effort is made by the pull of man's *patria* in the realm of the Eternal, which impels him to make a frame of life on earth which will uphold him *in via*. But civilization has its ups and downs, its development and decay, because human antagonisms evade man's best efforts. If this is true there are two mistakes to avoid. one is to confuse civilization with full community, it is, on the contrary, something which has to be remade with every succeeding generation. The second mistake is equally dangerous—to despise civilization because it is not full community, or regard it as outside God's providential order because it is not the Kingdom of Heaven.

True, the Church must be herself, the body of those who know the life in grace. Because they have known the love of God while they were sinners Christians cannot complain of any unfairness to themselves. Yet just because they have known that love they are concerned that society on earth shall be a temporal home for men. From the experience of grace Christians can learn something of the conditions of human concord even in the sinful world. Life in Christ not only requires but enables each to approach the other with his own meaning not given by the other; therefore he is free from the temptation to regard the other as a means to his own significance. That gives him strength to spare for what he means to his neighbour.

Only so can man be a good neighbour and not prey upon

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his fellows That, I think, is the meaning of the distinction drawn between Peace and Concord in the Mattins collect. Peace is harmony within men, a unity of their powers Concord is harmony between men; but the second, Concord, depends upon the first, Peace. In other words, healing begins at home, and our Prayer Book Collect in Mattins also makes an important distinction when it speaks of God as the *Author* of Peace but the *Lover* of Concord. Peace is the work of God in man. Concord between them is the fruit of faithful response to and use of peace. Concord is indirectly the work of God, but it is the work of man and is pleasing to God when it is made. Peace is the work of repentance by which men put themselves at the disposal of God for his reordering Concord is one of the fruits of repentance.

By analogy, as every nation or social group moves towards internal health and strength, it can become a source of healing in the concourse of peoples; it will be able to act with them without the grasping spirit which demands that they provide the means of its own recovery. So while good politics and the making of civilization are not the Kingdom of God— and if taken to be the Kingdom mankind will be in a worse state than if it had them not—yet they are the will of God for man while the Kingdom of God delays.

XII

THE THEOLOGY OF POLITICS¹



I will touch on three points: the nature of political activity in the light of Christian doctrine, the relationship of morality and power in politics, and a short conclusion on the political problem of to-day.

I. THE NATURE OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF MAN

This doctrine rests upon three affirmations. First, man is a creature and shares with other creatures on earth certain limitations due to their part in Nature and the historic process. Secondly, man is a particular kind of creature, made in the image of God; there is an element in him which is spiritual. This central spiritual power in man lifts him to some extent above his participation in Nature and history. He is not entirely a product of them. In this sense he is by nature a spiritual being. Thirdly, in his actual existence he is sinful, living neither in accord with his limitation as an earthly creature nor with the supremacy of the spirit in him.

Do politics belong to man as human or to man as a sinner rebelling against his essential nature? They certainly belong to him as spiritual, for politics are an activity of the reason and will of man, of thought and decision. Animals are not political; the faultless communism of the ants is a biological not a political phenomenon. Politics are man's effort to transcend the limits of Nature and process, but they can never take him right out of them. His politics cannot ignore his family or tribal life, his race, nationality or link with locality, as the rationalists assume.

Sin manifests itself in two ways: by the denial of man's free-

¹ Opening Address to the 1943 Summer School of Sociology.

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dom inhering in his spirit, which leads him to submerge his life in the cosmic flux; or by the denial of limitations imposed by Nature and history. The first leads to cynicism, undue pessimism and complete relativity in politics; the second to over-optimism and utopian rationalism. To-day men disillusioned with the second error are moved to the first.

Politics represent the elements of freedom, reason, decision in social life. They arise on top of the soul-life, and assume its functioning. In society this soul-life corresponds to the tribal consciousness, with its economic, social and cultural basis. This has commonly been ignored and even despised in the post-Enlightenment period. But man is only a civic animal in part. Though he may have learnt, by practice, to be a member of social groups based upon common interests or common opinion, he was, as an animal, a family fellow—a tribal, gentile, or gregarious animal, living in a group to which he belongs by right of common ancestry, history and geographical habitat. In each new generation man begins again as a being whose relations with others are a family affair. Man begins as a tribesman, a man of natural relationships. This pre-political basis, this pre-condition of political activity, is a necessity for the freedom, decision and thought which make politics. Man is not an angel. He requires certainty and settlement in some sphere before he can act in freedom, decision and experiment in others. The crisis in Europe is largely due to the fact that while all post-Enlightenment views tend to make political life all-inclusive in the social order, Totalitarianism tends to assimilate politics to tribal organization. It is a gross attempt of life as a whole in the social field to subdue an overreaching politics to itself.

This truth, that only in one part of the soul is man free for political action, means that good politics require that he must be able to count on a certain settlement in religion, culture and economics. It is also necessary that the forces in this more undeliberate part of man's life should work with and not contrary to the more conscious aims which make up politics. Marx said this in terms of the economic factors behind politics, when Liberalism had neglected them, but he took too narrow a view of these sub-political forces. The neglect of these, or the

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assumption that they follow political decision and opinion, constitutes an exaggeration of the human freedom which man has by creation. We might say that modern man has lost his moral freedom in politics to a large extent because in an earlier period he exaggerated the freedom he has metaphysically, i.e. by nature or creation.

We now turn to the effect of sin upon this social activity of man, which includes deliberate political aims and a number of sub-political forces. Two views have been described (in the Syllabus of the School) which deny that politics belong to man's essence as man and assert that they come from a defect in man. Certain of the Church fathers and the theology of the Reformation, on the one hand, and many rationalist or idealist theories, on the other, take this view. The first, with a pessimistic outlook on man, hold that politics are due to sinfulness, they are a dyke against egoism. The second, which include all forms of ultimate anarchism on earth, hold that the State will disappear when man becomes truly human, by some evolutionary change or class conflict. This over-optimistic view believes in heaven on earth.

How far can we say that redemption delivers man from politics? It is necessary to distinguish between two kinds of civic activity: organized society due to the finiteness of man and the coercive acts of society due to man's sinfulness. Many theological errors arise from confusing finiteness and sinfulness. It is an easy mistake to make, for they are closely linked in man's actual existence. Sinfulness refuses to accept the limitations of finitude, and feels them to be a defect to be overcome only by domination. Redemption removes the feeling that creaturely limitation is a defect and allows the redeemed to stand joyfully before God with all his finitude. And of course redeemed humanity would have no coercion. Heaven would be an order rather than an organization, for its members would not be conscious of an organizing power outside themselves.

It is to be noted that Dr. Micklem in *The Theology of Politics* takes politics in the Aristotelian sense as the civic activity of man, organizing society due to the finitude of man. In this sense politics belong to man in his essence. But, as coercive, politics belong to man not in his essence but as sinful. As man is

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sinner in the actual world, the Fathers and Protestants were right as against the Utopians and Marxists; man will need coercive politics always on earth. It should however be noted that coercive political action is sinful man's own corrective of human egoism. Though civic justice becomes tainted with injustice, as Niebuhr is always insisting, in its origin it is the reaction of man's essence to his sinfulness.

If we may speculate, we can say that without the Fall we should still need organization but not coercion. We should want postal sorters for our letters, for instance, and these would need foremen to teach and advise. But such supervisors would not be wanted to see that the others do their work, assuming, of course, that in an unfallen world every job is a real job, meeting a real need, and not a device to make work.

II AIMS AND POWER IN POLITICS

We now come to the relation of Morality and Power in Politics. The use of coercive power is both the result of sin and the occasion of greater sin. Politics are good to the extent to which they use this dangerous instrument of power in the interest of the good aims of a community. But aims and power are always liable to fall apart. Saint Paul's condition before conversion was the inability of the soul to bring its power behind his aim of keeping the law, and his conversion created a real ability to do so. Christ provided the healing and the power behind the aim he had as a good Jew. History is full of this falling-apart of aims and power. Many results we value have come about by the power of certain people who did not always want the aims achieved. Hildebrand, for example, by seeking a theocratic imperialism brought about a duality in the loyalty of European man—between spiritual and secular power—which gave Europe the framework of freedom. Cromwell did not believe in toleration, but by demanding with force a right of worship for his followers, toleration in religion soon became an established consequence. On the other hand, there are numberless examples of aims held sincerely and fought for but not achieved. Such were the great hopes of modern liberalism, the hopes of Peace, Prosperity and Democracy.

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The tragedy of that liberal era is that its aims were developed on the basis of social strength inherited from the older period of feudalism. When that foundation began to crumble, quite lately, the aims had no power of themselves. It is one of the consequences of this that society, having lost power in its sub-political organic relationships, has to recover strength by vesting all power in government.

In a sense the present war is a conflict between communities with ineffective political aims (the democracies) and those who have given up aims and turned to pure power (Fascist tendencies). Men are continually in danger of giving up the difficult art of putting power behind their aims and relapsing into one or other of two evasive basic attitudes. Either they believe that power, success, the event, creates the good, the true, or they imagine that good aims carry their own power. Germany is a peculiar repository of the first basic attitude, which her thinkers and seers have erected into a principle. You have heard much propaganda taking for granted that events, facts, are the test of right—and we all at some point believe it. But German philosophy from Kant to Nietzsche, her politics in Hegel and Marx, and some applications of Luther's '*sola fide*' tell in the same direction. And Goethe's priority of the deed over 'the word' speaks the same tone in which Hitler says '*entscheidung*'. The deed, the successful act, justifies itself. We in the West have not escaped this idolatry of the deed. Much of our recent history and present planning is justified by the assumption that the fact of certain industrial and commercial developments shall be the determinant of social, educational, moral and even religious development. But in the political sphere our error has been the opposite of the German. We have thought that 'the word', the idea, the aim has its own power. We carried on a 'phoney' war for a long time, and the French, the most politically conscious people in Europe, lost themselves in a furor of political discussion, leaving power to the exploiters of 'the common man'.

The first false basic attitude, if and when expressed theologically, amounts to putting the conflict of good and evil in the godhead—as both part of the necessary cosmic plan. This peeps out in so much German thought and literature. The

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second basic attitude virtually denies the depth of the conflict in man and assumes that more intensive willing of the good aim will produce its own effective power.

III. THE POLITICAL PROBLEM OF TO-DAY

To sum up: (1) The re-creation of political consciousness depends upon man regaining strength in the non-political realm. An integrating principle for the pre-political sphere which includes family, culture, livelihood must be found. For man cannot be a self-conscious citizen all along the line, all the time. The alarming problem of our time is that when man is called to exercise vast political responsibility, he is at the same time torn away from the pre-political bases of his life. The threat to political life lies in the belief that politics can do everything, and that political ability can be interchanged with other kinds of ability, domestic, technical or commercial. (2) The task of religion in this matter is not to be the sustainer of political activity, but so to guide social and functional relationships that politics take their proper and limited place in co-ordinating non-political activities. Too much politics, like too much education, is a sign of social decline. (3) The temptation of the natural man is to seek one unifying principle short of God. This is sought in some immanent fact of the natural and historic process. It is now being sought in an all-inclusive politics. But all human problems are divisible, and the refusal to believe this is lack of faith in God. In philosophy, if a man is taught that he cannot know anything unless he knows the whole, he will soon believe that he can know nothing at all and become a sceptic. So in politics, if he is led to believe that he can only think and act under one all-inclusive social principle he will soon realize that he cannot act at all. Only when he breaks up his problems, as God has created his life into various layers, and can do this with faith that their unity lies with God, will he desist from the sisyphian task of finding one over-arching principle abstracted from his own existence and making it do duty for God.

XIII

THE GERMAN PROBLEM¹



I. FREEDOM TO CHOOSE A GOVERNMENT

The Atlantic Eight Points provide a useful starting-point if regard is had to their defects. The chief of these defects is that they are too political, in the sense that they assume that political aims determine military, economic, cultural and social forces, instead of being largely determined by them. This is the weak spot in all democratic thinking. It makes us overlook the factors which threaten our own political tradition, and it is only the relative robustness of this tradition that enables us to underestmate the extent to which military, economic, social and cultural developments mould our political formations or destroy them. The danger of this illusion is all the greater when we try to think for Europe and Germany in particular.

I fear, therefore, that the Eight Points will not get us much nearer enlisting support from inside Germany in the overthrow of Nazism, and will not make much convincing appeal to the serious and effective people in the oppressed countries; though in the latter the engagement to ensure more liberty and livelihood than Hitler can give, and the disclaimer of territorial or other aggression, will surely have a popular appeal. But for those who have some insight into the European situation, the concern will not be for the quality of the aims themselves, but for the conditions of fulfilling them and our power to see that they are fulfilled.

The problem comes to a head in connection with points 2 and 3, which deal with frontiers and governments. This idea of freely expressed wishes with regard to territorial boundaries and forms of governments, does not touch the main problem of

¹ 1943.

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Germany or of many another European country. The problem is not freedom to choose, but power to do so, when and if compulsion is removed. Let us keep to the question of government, for this will bring us near to the centre of the problem, and let us provisionally talk of Germany as one people for all the ambiguity of that procedure.

The third point offers, say to Germany, freedom to choose its government, but no guidance as to how to choose when they have that freedom, and this is what probably they most want to know. It is just the inability to choose that was the problem which led to the support of Hitler. Germany in this matter, as in many others, represents a later and more acute stage of the problem of all modern nations. A *de facto* government gets a certain real support just because it is there, in spite of many dissatisfactions and dislikes of it, and because the opportunity of free choice would face the population with the need for making a decision they are not up to. That is why war is a tragic relief in such a situation of bewilderment. The question is answered at once: the government we want is the one that will give us victory.

To promise the Germans freedom to choose their own government after our victory is to offer them all the dilemmas under which they withered from 1918 to Hitler, and thus in a situation where, by hypothesis, we have destroyed the Nazi government which they in some real sense *chose*, even if they only chose it with half of their divided mind and will. This bare offer of freedom would in fact be a greater torment than an outright imposition of an efficient government from outside. The only useful alternative is to offer guidance which will enable them to choose. What does this involve?

No doling out of Anglo-Saxon democratic patter will do. Choice of or support for a government which will make for security and peace depends upon much more than a valuation of forms of government in the abstract. There are always two or more wills in the same people when they have to make such a choice, and the choice is never made whole-heartedly. It is made with a decision in favour of one dominant consideration in the mind of the politically effective body; it is often a *pis aller* decision taken in a situation with a limited number of

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possibilities none of which commands total confidence or enthusiasm. The art of guiding the formation of good political decisions is that of discovering the most fundamental, permanent and constructive elements in the conflicting will and mind of a people, and helping them to make those elements the decisive factor. This is not a naked political choice, it rests ultimately upon a number of other choices mainly concerned with the kind of life that a people wants to live, not only in its citizen-government relations, but in its economic, social, cultural and psychic existence. To bring out into effective consciousness this basic life style is most difficult in a time of stress and perplexity, for men are always mistaking the relatively more satisfactory conditions in an actual limited field for their permanent satisfactions. Those permanent satisfactions will not be only economic security and political stability, but behind these, a sense of significance which, if thwarted, will become perverted into the desire for prestige and power.

Therefore to help Germans to make their choice of government means to help them to discover what style of life they really want. This involves the question: what are the constituents of the German pattern of life which give Germans as a people a sense of significance? We shall have forced them to give up, again by hypothesis, the feeling of significance that depends upon military might. The desire for power over others is, in any man or group of men, always the result of lacking a well-founded sense of intrinsic significance. I can only list here some considerations which seem to me vital for this task of helping the Germans to discover what is their significance as a people, as a basis for helping them to choose their own government. It is the same problem as that of changing their psychology from a delinquent to a co-operative one.

Any real choice of government will be made by an estimate of its power to give economic security and a better livelihood, though it must always be kept in mind that a people will often pay a high price in loss of these things if its cultural, emotional and psychic demands are thwarted by conditions which promise security and prosperity.

Negatively, I think we should state at once that we cannot show Germany the way to prosperity and security by expecting

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her to join in the old international finance and commercial trading system. It has not served even the democracies well; it put Germany at the mercy of forces which, because she was not good at that game, first ruined her and then exploited her; and this led her to attribute her troubles to the behaviour of other nations as such, who were also being sabotaged by the system to a lesser degree; it subsidized her war potential without any national or political loyalties or conscience.

I would go farther, and approve a great deal of the original 'autarchic' economic programme, not only for Germany itself, but as offering clues and experience in a direction I believe we must all travel towards a more balanced internal economy and a measure of economic self-sufficiency. It should also be pointed out that the perversion of this programme into industrial domination of a *Herrenvolk* over merely agricultural slave-states is an extension of the plutocratic economic pattern, carried on by force instead of by money.

The social and cultural style of German life has been made up of a number of elements which we may hope still carry some appeal. These must be built on in any guidance for recovering political responsibility. It is noteworthy that the strength of Nazism lay largely in the fact that the Party was a government, a business, a school, and a church, all in one. This reveals a lack of mutual reinforcement in the previous set-up, as between the political, the economic, the cultural and religious forces. To find ways of overcoming this pre-Nazi disintegration is an essential part of the answer, as it affects Germany, to the question. What does freedom to choose a Government mean?

II. IN SEARCH OF A UNIFYING AIM

Is there an organizing principle which the Germans could adopt, more energetic than our official concoction of co-operation, such as would have a force equal to their will to power? And is it possible to envisage a unifying aim in the realization of which Germany and ourselves may co-operate, for co-operation by itself is at best too empty and flat a conception, and at worst only a veil for the triumph of the stronger party's way of life.

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In search for an answer to these questions one should ponder the distinction drawn by Ernst Troeltsch between German and Western convictions about the very nature of Society. He writes:

'We see on the one hand an eternal, rational and divinely ordained system of order, embracing both morality, and law; we see, on the other, individual living, and perpetually new incarnations of an historically created mind. Those who believe in an eternal and divine Law of Nature, the Equality of Man, and a sense of unity pervading mankind, and who find the essence of humanity in those things, cannot but regard the German doctrine as a curious mixture of mysticism and brutality. Those who take an opposite view—who see in history an ever-moving stream, which throws up unique individualities as it moves, and is always shaping individual structures on the basis of a law which is always new—are bound to consider the West-European world of ideas as a world of cold rationalism and equalitarian atomism, a world of superficiality and Pharisaism.'¹

I preface my comment upon this important statement with three pre-suppositions:

Firstly, the German people will realize by defeat that as a matter of brute fact there are some things they cannot do, namely, to expand and dominate at the expense of other peoples. The Allies should also be brought to realize that Germany's international delinquent behaviour is a false attempt to cope with internal political, social and spiritual frustrations.

Secondly, the Allies' blocking of Germany's aggressiveness does not forbid the fulfilment of her positive social aims. Unless the Allies are going to police Germany indefinitely, she must be encouraged to realize those aims.

Thirdly, this task of disentangling Germany's valid aims from the spurious and destructive form her pursuit of them has taken, is a common task in which the Allies (European especially) have to co-operate. This is not fundamentally affected by the

¹ Lecture on 'The Ideas of Natural Law and Humanity in World Politics'. Included by Prof Ernest Barker in his translation of O. Gierke's *Natural Law and the Theory of Society* (Cambridge), Appendix I.

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fact that we have one extra-European ally and one Far Eastern enemy.

Now, one of the conditions of finding a common aim is to see as clearly as possible the different ways in which Germany and the Democracies conceive the basis of society. Roughly the main division is between the western democratic and the historical and romantic conceptions. Russia, since the influence of Marxism, represents a kind of hybrid of the other two. The problem is to find whether the two dominant strands as represented in their best exponents can understand one another, whether there is anything in common on which to build, whether each needs the other as a complement and whether each can recover from perversions and disintegrations of its original inspiration. This paper sets out only the general differences with some indication of the perversions. Attempted answers to the above question are left over to a later stage.

The Western tradition is based upon the Stoic and Christian teaching of a Natural Law of eternal validity and of a common humanity. On this view law is in the last resort grounded in moral principles by which the empirical world of actual fact must be judged and directed. This tradition believes in certain universal ends common to mankind, for they reflect the essential nature of man. It holds that the positive law of any particular state should be an expression of the eternal law and that the will of the sovereign is the administrator and not the source of law. It has tended to individualism of the person and has sought the dignity of the common element in the human reason. Hence its latter-day belief in the possibility of democracy, peace, national self-determination, leagues of nations and international understanding. Its ethos is ethical and rational.

This tradition has had two great upheavals. One was a departure from the original European theories of Natural Law. This had developed within the orbit of a universally believed and practised Christian faith which looked after the emotional, aesthetic and extra-political cultural life and in large measure directed economic behaviour to natural and moral ends. From the fifteenth century Natural Law came to be thought of mainly as Natural Rights associated with the optimistic estimate of

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human nature of the Enlightenment. It got divorced from the older hierarchies of activities and from the belief that men were always liable owing to pride and arrogance to do violence to the natural structure of their life. Human relations tended to be viewed in mathematico-physical terms and society as a contractual congeries of human atoms held together by reason and natural interests. Every problem was soluble rationally by a standard of utility.

The second upheaval came with the rise of industrialist commercialism which tended further to tear man away from his historically grown links with the earth, with locality, with family and traditional cultural and craft associations. It produced a feeling of uprootedness and loss of status both in this world and the heavenly; it left the human being with predominantly contractual and economic relations in which his existence could only be safeguarded by what he earned and paid for. This atomic impoverishment of the life of western man could not be remedied by the abstract kind of unities offered for his enthusiasm and loyalties; democracy, humanity, co-operation, mutual dependence, nor by the swing over from an inorganic individualism to an equally inorganic collectivism.

The modern German conception is entirely different. For it the formative force of society is not ideas, beliefs, embodiment of eternal laws, but rather the historical individual life process of a people, in which ideas are the expression of, and not a standard of judgment upon, the organic complex of the Folk life. It represents a romantic counter-revolution against the classical European conception, an organic idea of the group-mind, half-aesthetic, half-religious, as the absolute and final criterion of all thought and activity. It gains a certain strength from its antipathy to the abstractions and self-deceptions of bourgeois idealism. Its ethos is voluntarist and irrational, putting will above morals and historic actuality above reason. In this it has some derivative support from the Lutheran Faith-versus-Law attitude, and the same irrationalist temper takes a biological turn with the recent urge to 'think with the blood'.

The appeal of this view to civilized minds like the philosopher Fichte and the great jurist Gierke lies in its appreciation

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that the concrete life history of a people is a reality with a stronger pull upon the human soul than the Natural Law theories in their modern form and in a context where men are cut off from robust community settings. But this view of the historically conditioned essence of society has, too, been debased. It has encouraged a view of law as independent of and hampered by ethics, making the *de facto* sovereign power the creator and not the agent of law, thus going back on the basis of all civilized living, which insists that positive law is to be checked by its conformity or otherwise to the eternal law. It develops the theory of two standards of behaviour, one within the *Volk* and another to those outside. It tends to destroy the balance and plurality of powers and functions within society in order to make for a unitary state and to accord human activities a title to exist only in so far as they minister to the consolidation of political power.

We may say that the classical western tradition fastens on those elements in man by which he transcends nature and history, namely reason, ethics, law and spirit. It marked a great achievement in human development when the natural and historical bases of society were too strong to be denied. When these, however, began to be undermined in the modern period, then the western notions appeared abstract, disintegrating or as ideological defences of dominant interests.

The historical-romantic view fastens on those elements in man by which he is implicated in nature and history, namely his ties with the soil, race, community and national individuality. These represent an inescapable layer of social reality, but when regarded as subject to no law but their own they become the material of ruthlessness, group egotism, denial of common human rights and a denial of rational and universal standards. This view tends towards despotism within and aggressiveness without and to the enslavement of religion, culture, science, education and economics to the unitarian aim of community solidarity. It is antipathetic to the liberal idea that man brings to his social relations a meaning not entirely derived from them and that extra-political purposes, religious, cultural and technical, best serve his life when they retain their own intrinsic distinctions.

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While German thought has a strong bias in favour of the historical doctrine of society, National Socialism has perverted this by the affirmation that beyond the vital needs of the ethnic community legal enactments have no value. But it must be recognized that even to-day German society holds together only because its population can to a large extent count on a general 'normative' law and its enforcement by court and civil police. The economic rights of capitalist organization in industry are most strongly protected by laws of general validity.

It must also be remembered that the historical view of the nature of society and law is not peculiarly German. It has had strong upholders in the English tradition, notably in Burke, and in Frenchmen, like Montesquieu and Comte.

Again, National Socialist apologists do not in fact accept the communal, historic theory of law and society, for they give the right to decide which are real communities to the National Socialist Party. It is therefore a political decision, not the historic growth of a people, that gives it a basis of law. National Socialist doctrine uses the strengths and defects of both conceptions as it suits its fundamental dogma of political arbitrariness and expediency.

It follows from such considerations that both these conceptions must recover their virtues and overcome their perversions. Natural Law views divorced from real community become unreal and hypocritical; historic conceptions without rational and spiritual ends which go beyond social cohesion make for brutality, cynicism and pessimism. A unifying idea can only be reached by a constructive recovery from the disintegration of each. The Democracies require a critical attitude to their own Natural Law assumptions in order to rescue them from the rationalist and abstract turn they took with the Enlightenment and from the inroads made upon their application by large-scale mechanization. They need to recover some sense of the proper hierarchy in human activities within each social unit as a basis for more harmonious relations between persons, classes, interests and national groups.

The Germans, who absolutized the historical sense, can be brought and encouraged to give that sense a universal instead of a private significance. For indeed there is nothing in-

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herently incompatible between their organic historical interpretation of community and a concourse of mutually helpful communities, each retaining its distinctive excellence. And something of this organic sense is necessary to the democracies if they are not to become totalitarian in their own way by a collectivization of uprooted human atoms held together by external controls

XIV

THE HEALING OF THE NATION



In every society man has to deal with two sets of problems. The first is his relation to his fellows and to society as a whole. We may call these the problems he sees when he looks around him, horizontally, as it were. But man has also to deal with the internal life of himself and those associated with him, and there he is concerned, at one end of the scale, with his relation to the earth, of which his body is a part and on which he lives; at the other end, he is concerned with his relation to God. And between these two links are the whole scale of interests and activities which make up his existence: his family, his sex and love life, his economic tasks, his political interests, his thought, his artistic and cultural powers, and his moral loyalties. These are the facts of his life which he recognizes when he looks into himself, and he sees them standing, as it were, in a vertical dimension. It is the order in which a man or a group of men holds these things that determines what we call their character.

The nation is a body of people united by geographical togetherness, by a share in the same history, and by the rubbing together of ideas and purposes. It has thereby reached some kind of common view about the order of value and importance in its interests, activities, and loyalties.

When such a common view can be counted on in a nation, both in the minds of its members and in the organization of its life, then the strains *between* men, due to conflicts of interests, of ideas and of power, do not injure society very deeply. It does not become sick or diseased. In fact a healthy society is one which recognizes that all the concerns of men, even the legitimate and valuable ones, are tainted with egoism, and it aims at a balance of powers so that they do not destroy one another.

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But the situation becomes much more serious when there is conflict in the up-and-down dimension in which men have arranged their interests and activities. This kind of disorder leads to antagonism *between* people who want to co-operate together. For example, the success of marriage depends much more upon the inner attitude of the partners to the elementary things of life, such as work, recreation, money, children, beauty, pain, death, bliss, religion, and so on, than upon their external attitude to one another. Or, two men may be united by a common interest in football. But if one sees it as a game and an art, while the other regards the sport as secondary to the commercial side of modern recreation, then there will be a disharmony which would not have arisen if they had never been drawn together on the football ground. My point is that social health is not a mere matter of the right will between men, but that where there is a false or conflicting order in human activities, such good will as exists will not be effective. I am afraid that most of our leaders, in the State and in the Church, ignore this kind of conflict within the purpose of the same men, associations, and nations. They mainly urge people to get together and make the necessary sacrifices. Have you noticed that the second great commandment which bids us love our neighbour as ourself, is not very helpful alone, for it does not tell us how truly to love ourself? Unless I am trying to obey the first commandment, to love God with my heart and mind, I could wish my neighbour to share all my sins and follies, and I would not then love for him a truly human life.

In our modern Western society men have tried to overcome the worst conflicts between men while their internal life as persons or nations or associations was, in many respects, upside down instead of upside up. Human beings always try to make up for their inner, spiritual distress by compelling others to alter their behaviour. We seek to cure an internal problem by external changes. The Germans are a good example of this tendency to blame the rest of the world for their own suffering, which, however, is not entirely their own, but only the worst effects of a malady which has afflicted all modern nations.

When a patient is seriously ill, a good doctor does two things. He tries to stop the cause of the trouble, and he also relieves

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the painful symptoms so that the patient saves enough strength to overcome the infection. Earlier essays in this book have shown that the deepest cause of our national sickness is loss of the religion which has formed our culture. We cannot get the Christian results we expect, in the behaviour of men to one another, so long as our souls and minds are not continually being reformed by Christian devotion and thought. I am concerned at present with the problems that lie between the root trouble in unbelief and the most external symptoms in unnatural strains and conflicts between men. This intermediate trouble is the one I have described as an order of values in the activities of our life which does not correspond to the nature of man. In this sense, modern society is largely unnatural and that is why it is largely inhuman, in spite of much public spirit and good will.

I cannot stay to examine with you the connection between an unnatural order in our economics, politics, and culture, and loss of belief in the Christian Gospel. That would require a lesson in Theology. Such a lesson would also suggest, however, that Christianity has so freed man from spiritual fears that he has been able to devote his attention to the intellectual and practical conquest of the physical world. It would show, too, that the high value man has thus learnt to give himself has this danger, that it makes his thought man-centred and his soul arrogant about the means he has devised. So the more power he has, the more he needs the grace of God to cure those pretensions which make him worship one of the elements in his make-up, such as his reason, his sex, or his race, or one of his devices, economic, political, or technical. He *also* needs the grace of God to overcome his despair when he has realized that the idol he has made is devouring his humanity. If his ultimate loyalty is given to something less than God, he will seek relief by smashing one idol made out of his own needs or achievements and he will erect another. That is the history of European revolutions, from the French which defied reason, to the Nazi which defies blood and violence. Other civilizations, in antiquity and in the East, have found in their religions a good and wise guide. But Western man cannot have a civilized life which is not formed by the Christian understanding, if he

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wants the Christian results in the attitude of men to one another and in the recognition that the human person is more important than all systems.

Let us, then, look at one or two of the consequences of the process of healing the nation which we should expect from a recovery of Christianity. By Christianity I mean a certain relation of man to God, taught and established by Christ, which offers men a criterion for putting each interest and activity in its proper place, or, as Christians would say, enables it to do the job which God intends it to do for man.

Take a general result first, which affects the most terrible crisis of the modern soul, the conflict between the inner and the outer life of man. Most men feel treated as items in a system, yet they accept it for the sake of security and as an alternative to chaos. We cry inwardly for liberation, yet we make plans for the further regimentation of our lives. Even apart from the controls necessary in war-time, we feel that the modern nation is a great being which does things to us, rather than an expression of our spontaneous social faith and loyalty. There is a terrific tension between man and society, which takes its worst form in the resentment of which 'fifth columnists' are made. And the dictatorships have arisen out of this tension by imposing an external order in their countries because there is no order inside the consciousness of their citizens. A revival of religion will recover a truly human order there, in the consciousness and understanding of men. That is the root problem of modern society, and it is a spiritual problem. Only if human existence reflects the truth that man is the child of the eternal God, can he become the master and not the creature of social systems.

To regard men as existing for organized society is the widest aspect of our modern disorder. It is no cure to repeat catchwords about human personality. We must have an organization of living which registers this priority of the human person. Mankind has already got one element of such an organization, in the family. Its security, however, has been severely shaken by modern conditions. That is why the Church leaders said that the family as a social unit must be safeguarded. You see, before a man associates with others for one particular purpose

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such as work, art, or politics, he already belongs to a group by common ancestry. He is first of all a tribal or family fellow. He starts life as a being with natural ties and these are relationships of whole persons to one another in the family. It is from this environment that he gradually learns to enter into association with a great number of other groups, but in each case with only one or two parts of his life—his work, his play, citizenship, and so on. The family should therefore be the nucleus of all society which treats human persons as ends and not as means. Though the tribal bond weakens with the maturity of the young, a good family should have given them a true understanding of human relationships. If, on the contrary, the family environment has been too harsh, the younger members will tend to regard the whole universe as unfriendly and bear a grudge against all men. If it has been too soft and the children spoilt, they will feel that they have been cheated when they have to knock about the world which gives them no special personal privileges. The healing of the nation demands that all other social considerations give place to the preservation of the family, because it is the human grouping ordained by God, prior to the State and economic systems, as a school for the rearing of human beings as persons.

But now, in addition, for the proper order to be achieved between persons and systems, it will be necessary to recover also the proper human order inside the systems which make up our national life. If you have followed my argument that disorder within persons and associations leads them to prey on others, you can find the same law at work in the organized purposes of society. The chief of these are the economic, the political, and the cultural activities. I have not included the religious here, because religion is not an attitude of man to one aspect of his life, but a relation to God beyond them all, which pulls man round so that these things fall into their rightful place and reinforce one another by each performing its proper function. If one of them fails, it tends to prey on the others, and they all get jumbled up in a confusion of mutual weaknesses and recriminations. In our modern democracies economic life has not done well its own job of converting material from the earth into something for man's use and enjoyment with the least

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amount of trouble. Economic life has become a wild-goose chase which absorbs a lot of political, cultural, and spiritual energy because it works badly, very much as a dyspeptic sec's life in terms of the stomach. The political side of national life therefore tries to come to the rescue. It enters itself into business instead of performing its proper political function. This is to determine common human rights and to co-ordinate social activities which run on their own vitality and usefulness. And you know also how science and art, recreation and even education, in the cultural field, have largely been perverted in order to keep an unnatural and self-contradictory economy going. I am sorry to say, too, that the word of organized religion has too often lately been spoken in order to induce faith in a society when it is difficult to appeal to its own social excellence.

One conspicuous sign of the healing of the nation will therefore be a separation of the cultural, the political, and the economic functions of society, so that each makes its contribution out of its own strength and does not sap the vitality of the others. The disease of our recent civilization has been the subordination of life to an economic scramble. It is the mission of Britain at this historic moment to cure that disease, for she did most to start it. If we are to do this without political despotism that passes for a cure abroad, we must recover a natural order *within* the departments of our economic system. We can express that order in several ways. Here are two. Labour is for the sake of production and distribution, production and distribution are for consumption, that is, for the use and enjoyment of things. Money is for bringing together the results of economic activity and people's natural wants. It is necessary to add that the nation's production must rest upon a sound foundation by the full use of its land which should be a self-reproducing unit, foreign trade exchanging the over-spill of a saturated and balanced home market. We can also put the natural order in terms of occupations in this way: agriculture is basic, factory production comes second, after that commerce, and finance the most instrumental of all, serving, but in no sense deciding, economic purposes.

I have tried to describe an arrangement of the national life which corresponds to the nature of man. I am sure this is re-

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quired for the fulfilment of the Church leaders' fourth principle, that every man shall have a sense of vocation in his work. I think, too, it is the only way of showing that a healthy national life is one which does not need expansion at the expense of others, and surely that is a task laid upon us before the world just now. Most important of all, however, such a re-ordering of the nation's purposes is necessary if Britain is to safeguard and develop that political and spiritual liberty which has been her great contribution to man's fulfilment in this world.

The healing of the nation means conformity, not only with the laws of man's being, but also conformity with the special destiny to which God is calling it.

XV

SHOULD NATIONS SURVIVE?

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One of the most serious problems we have to face in our period of history is the future of nations. There are a number of strong forces at work which are making for the abolition of the nation as the most self-conscious and powerful of human groupings. What attitude should Catholics take up in this question? Those of the younger generation who want to take part in forming the post-war world will have to face it. I have often considered it, and I find that there is little direct guidance in Catholic social theory. The reason for this is part of the problem, and I think it may be of use just to outline the problem itself without being able to give an authoritative theory which could claim the title of Catholic.

There is a fairly full Catholic philosophy of the family and of government; both these belong to the order of nature. They are part of man's essence and will be with him always. The nation belongs rather to the order of history and is a transitional form of human community. Like the ancient city-state or the medieval Empire, the nation, in our modern sense can be seen as having the divine warrant as a particular historical achievement. On the one hand, it provides tasks in performing which man makes his soul, and, on the other, it may drag man down if it goes wrong, and be displaced through God's judgment by another form of social structure.

The nation, as we understand it in modern times, emerged in the fifteenth century with the break-up of Christendom, when the two translocal powers of Empire and Church began to lose their unifying force. When the Chaplain in Shaw's *St. Joan* refers to someone as a Frenchman, the Baron asks: 'Where did you pick up that expression? Are these Burgundians . . . and

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Gascons beginning to call themselves Frenchmen, just as our fellows are beginning to call themselves Englishmen.'

And he adds. 'They actually talk of France and England as their countries. . . . If this cant of serving their country once takes hold of them, good-bye to the authority of the feudal lords and good-bye to the authority of the Church. That is good-bye to you and me ' This illustrates how strange was the new idea of nationality less than four hundred years ago.

The national state has often been formed by including people of different blood, language and territory through 'an invitation issued by one group of men to carry out some enterprise in common' Renan defined it: 'In the past, an inheritance of glories and regrets; in the future, one and the same programme to carry out. . . . The existence of a nation is a daily plebiscite.' In defending the nation we are defending our to-morrows more than our yesterdays

Now, to-day, the existence of the national state is threatened in several ways The spread of a cosmopolitan technical culture and commerce is tending to make peoples have more and more the same kind of history. In the end this might well override political and geographical distinctions Some of the most powerful economic influences such as heavy industry, trade and finance have much stronger loyalties to their world interests than their human agents have to the nation. There is also a kind of economic rationalism of both capitalist and socialist type, which encourages the idea that economic needs and motives are more fundamental than political, cultural and national ones. The division of mankind into nations is a nuisance to these interests Secondly, the rapid growth of power politics based upon technical and human organization seems to make the chief issues no longer between nations but between vast power groups of peoples which are indifferent to national characteristics. To recognize that a people cannot have independence as a nation is now supposed to be the mark of political realism, as for example in Prof. E. H. Carr's *Conditions of Peace*.

Thirdly, there are the idealists, who believe that the sovereignty of the national state has been the main cause of war and conflict, and believe that an international body will be

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more likely to submit itself and its members to some universal law of peoples than the national groups have done.

How are the Christians to assess the pros and cons of nationality to-day? Here are a few preliminary considerations, which I admit hardly even open up the question. First, let no one imagine that a future world in which the nation has been superseded will have the same kind of appeal to Christians as the pre-national period. Then there was a universal religion and a semi-Christian Empire and local politics, economies and cultures. To-day we have a universal economic culture which is tending to iron out politics and habits, and in which the supreme values of religious faith are private and non-cultural in their effect. And where so many 'international' forces are parasitic upon all peoples they affect, there may well be only social harm from extending their denationalizing tendencies.

Then, I think, no Christian will believe that the mere existence of well-defined national states is more likely to cause conflict than the existence of separate individuals causes quarrels. It all depends on what they say and do to one another. Distinctness and separateness are as much occasions of collaboration as of strife. There is, however, this difference: the abuses of nationalism are more dangerous than those of individualism, because in them the egoism of sinful men is more easily disguised as a community purpose. It will, however, be more deceptive still in groups who may exercise power *over* nations—it looks so good to be 'international'.

At a time when there is no common religious standard to which the peoples could submit policies, there is always the danger of the nation becoming an idol. But to replace national divisions either by greater power groups or by 'horizontal' divisions of interest, such as capital and labour, or business and politics, will merely re-group the 'interests' of sinful man.

When we ask, therefore, what is God's will for the future of the nation, the answer is not to be found in an appeal to the universal nature of man, as it is in the case of the family or government. We have to seek the answer in terms only of God's will for men in a particular historic situation—existentially, as the religious jargon of to-day would put it. We have to ask whether

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the fact of nationality, which reached its greatest strength in the nineteenth century is not at the moment, in spite of its terrible perversions, a counterbalance in the divine providence to greater and more deceptive idolatries. It is of concern to Catholics that the groupings in which human loyalties, good and bad, are collected, should not be too far removed from the control of their members, should not be so vast that their power cannot be checked by similar groupings, and should not be so extensive that they no longer represent the local communities within them. There is, in my view, much to be said at this juncture of history for Christians supporting the survival of the nation. Nationality has not yet exhausted its contribution to the spiritual stock of mankind, and all alternatives on the horizon will involve still more unmanageable power groups. There is much to be done in developing a Catholic doctrine of nationality. The title of this article was suggested by that of a book by Miss Hilda D. Oakeley, which is a suggestive treatment of the question. Very important light is also shed upon it by the Pelican reprint of H. T. Macinder's *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, written just after the last war.

XVI

THE MENACE OF NATIONAL 'CHRISTIANITY'



It is said that General Montgomery kept in his quarters a full-size portrait of Marshal Rommel. Whether this is true or an inspired legend, it illustrates the important truth that you must become familiar with the personality of your opponent if you are to defeat him.

A religion which in its essence does not derive from Christianity but from the natural instincts of the British people has invaded the Anglican Communion and a large number of the Free Church bodies. Though it uses the terminology of Christianity it is, in fact, a more serious menace to it than definite unbelief. Let us try to define and identify it. Briefly, it represents an undogmatic, un-supernatural and un-evangelical religion. It equates Christianity with good ideals. It attaches no real, vital meaning to sin, grace, redemption, or to the Church as a divine society. It has lost the sense of the difference and complementary nature of natural and revealed religion, the proper tension of which made the real influence of Christianity upon our civilization. Instead, this religion is one of moral exhortation; it thrives in Church groups which once represented distinct and sincere camps of differing doctrine and spirituality, and which now have only a social or political significance. From hundreds of pulpits, Anglican and Free Church, there is preached the same sermon: we need a new world; this requires new men; you must be ready to make sacrifices; put some Christianity into your planning; the future lies with youth (poor youth); we are all interdependent anyway—better recognize it—etc.; then something about our Lord as a pioneer or leader of men. Nothing about God as creator, saviour, judge, or about the Cross, or about the soul and its

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cure—nothing about surrender of the will to Christ and that this involves surrender to Him in His visible but disfigured body the Church. The Anglicans mostly care little for their formularies and liturgical worship, which is hacked about to be a frame for 'topical' and 'relevant' devotions. Free Churchmen hardly strike an authentic evangelical note, or stand for any of the strong Reformation positions. A majority in both camps have joined in the same religion of Pelagian moral and social advice. This religion may well be called National, not because it is nationalistic, though the national effort in the war has largely called on its support—but rather because its one basis and bond is the natural religion of the English; it would possibly be found in pre-Druidical Britain! It has its parallels elsewhere, in places where social disintegration calls for an ethnic religion into which the specifically Christian bodies are largely drawn, and, while allowed to use their old Christian terms, they speak the language of social syncretism. Its most blatant example is, of course, Hitler's *Deutsche Christen*. Our version is decent, democratic and moral in comparison; but they all belong to the same category of religions that have their roots in society's own aspirations, and not in the Word of the transcendent God to society.

Spiritually dangerous forces always fasten on pure intentions. Consider three prominent examples.

Most of the reunion proposals here and abroad assume a common essence of Christianity, which is left over when the differences of denominations have been eliminated, in spite of the fact that each claimed in the days of its power to be the total and true form of Christianity. There is a mordant caricature of this reunion thought in Stephen Leacock's *Arcadian Adventures of the Idle Rich*.

"It's the only thing, Furlong," he said across the lunch table at the Mausoleum Club, "it's the only solution. The two Churches can't live under the present conditions of competition. We have here practically the same situation as we had with the two rum distilleries—the output is too large for the demand. One or both of the two concerns must go under. We'll propose a merger . . ." "You would hardly, I think," said Mr. Furlong with a quiet smile, "compare the Standard Oil

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Company to a Church." "Yes, Church union is different. In fact, it is one of the ideas of the day, and everyone admits that what is needed is the application of the ordinary business principles of harmonious combination, with a proper—er—restriction of output and general economy of operation . . . Skinner says that it is really an ideal form of Church union, one that he thinks is likely to be widely adopted. It has the advantages of removing all questions of religion, which he says are practically the only remaining obstacles to a union of all the Churches."

The whole question of reunion must be approached with penitence, love and seriousness, and if it is, we can carefully use the ease with which it is possible to ridicule the shallowness of many of the ways it is being handled.

In education, it is clear that a religious basis is being canvassed by right-minded people out of alarm for personal and social irresponsibility. But it is equally clear that no religious education can be an integrating force in society if it is wanted for that reason; still less if it consists of what is left over when all that makes up the life of a real Church is pared away, and we are left with a 'common' substratum.

This selected deposit is bound to be just that which society feels to tally with its aspirations, and it is just in these aspirations that its crisis lies. So when the *Times* says: 'Highly though a Church may value its own specific tenets, the value of National Christianity is higher still' (14th August 1949), we have to say that such a 'Christianity' from which Christian doctrine and Church allegiance can be lopped off and to which they can then be added on according to taste, is *not* Christianity, though it can make its own sounds with Christian noises. Approval of certain of the more manageable parts of Christian ethics and admiration for the character of Christ is not the same as being constrained by the Word of God in Christ; yet this delivery of ourselves, our opinions and our estimates to Him as God, and as the life-blood of His Mystical Body the Church, is precisely what Christianity is.

Then there is 'the application of Christianity to our social life'. The faults here are also corruptions of a necessary task, Christians have rightly come to feel that their faith and the knowledge this should give them about man in history and

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society ought to provide guidance for thought and action in delivering men from the spiritual, moral and social evils of industrialism. I have spent a quarter of a century trying to stimulate and help in this task. But now we have, instead, widespread pronouncements from pamphlets, platforms and pulpits which are merely religiously tinged versions of what the writer or speaker believes to be the most progressive effort of the world to improve itself. It is an attempt to cure a cultural crisis by moral appeals alone. By a cultural crisis I mean a disorder amounting to a conflict in the various purposes, spiritual, political, economic and scientific, often in the minds of the same people who are not aware of the conflict. This cannot be cured by 'pelagian' appeals to be altruistic, ready for sacrifices, to remember our dependence on one another. They can only be handled by illumination of the natural order in that dimension of human life which reaches from the earth to God, and by insight into the human distortions of it, which knowledge is what we call Catholic Sociology, such as is outlined in the document 'A Christian Realm'.

Now, this National or ethnic religion is not only a threat to Catholic Faith and Practice; it is equally a threat to Reformation theology, as the Continental Protestants have not been slow to see when confronted with European versions of the same thing. Genuine Evangelicals like John Berridge or Charles Simcon in this country would have counted it as a deceptive threat to the Gospel. That is why it is a mistake to call this thing 'Pan-Protestantism'. Since the authentic Protestant notes of justification, *sola fide*, and the contradiction between man and God, ceased to be clearly sounded—and they never made deep impression in this country—we have witnessed an uprising of the more genial, immanentist and natural ethical religion which is congenital to the Anglo-Saxon, and which tends always to equate the divine with the highest in man. Now Catholicism holds a tension between the two, the link and the contradiction between man and God. This is expressed theologically as immanence and transcendence, nature and grace, the affirmative and negative elements in the spiritual life. Humanism and Reformation stand each for one side of these pairs of complementary truths. So this humanist religion which

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has seeped up into the Churches is a secularized version of the other side of Catholicism, which is left when the element of salvation, judgment, grace, are taken away, elements upon which Reformation laid the whole weight. It is part of the terrible religious confusion of our times that this immanentist moralism and Reformation Christianity should both be wearing the same 'Protestant' label, for they each differ from Catholicism for the opposite reason. It is essential for our strategy in meeting the menace to have this quite clear.

A still more important need of our strategy, however, is to realize that this National 'Christianity' is the outcome of a real need of the modern soul. The temporal order has lost its bearings through complete severance from the divine, and modern man is in a period of agony through the opposite pulls of his social situation, and his moral aims. So after a period in which the Christian Churches have been at best piously introverted and at worst self-righteous, they are suspected of being quite blind to the deep crisis of the modern world. Our rational, liberal, democratic society therefore evolves its own immanentist religion, while Hitler has produced his version of what they call 'a positive relationship between Christianity and the new manifestation of the Reich'. Each of these represents a bid for the soul of a modern community.

Therefore, we have to recognize that these forms of ethnic religion, false as they are to Christian faith, are a sort of revenge taken by a modern community for the inability of the Church of the last few centuries to diagnose and to reform the pattern of our culture. Nevertheless, it has to be said that this national religion is a threat to the Catholic faith, and it is so precisely because it is a threat to Man himself and his real needs. For it is in fact merely the religious form of the very disease it is hoped that it will cure—the spiritual disease which consists in believing that the colossal conflict of purposes in our technical civilization can be resolved by the immanent moral force within it. It fails to meet the two deepest needs of the human soul, the personal need of remission of guilt, repentance, salvation and man's need for union with God Who is behind History, and it fails to provide principles of judgment upon the history itself of our time. Instead it merely colours with Christian tints

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the latest programmes and catch-words of the world's own efforts at self-improvement. It is neither priestly nor prophetic.

To sum up this diagnosis, the natural religion which is supplanting the Faith is a false solution of a real problem. It is for Catholic Christians to meet that real need in the proper and God-given way.

XVII

SUNDAY CLOTHES



There is of course a better way of keeping the Lord's Day than by wearing a suit or a dress that is put away for the rest of the week. And there should be nothing but moral support for those who regard the habit of always wearing Sunday clothes and never going to Church as a mockery of Christian observance. The habit, though fast disappearing with the elderly generation, is not yet extinct. But it does usually date the practitioner as having grown to middle-life before the Four Years War. It is an undoubted gain when John and Mary, of a younger generation, insist that to meet the Lord at the Lord's Service is the proper Sunday observance for the Christian believer and worshipper, whether it be in working-cos-tume, slacks or hiking habit. Compared with this awakened sense of worship as a real response, the drowsy Sunday at home in black coat and best flock, which the more comfortable classes enjoyed before the automobile week-end became a craze, was at best the ghost of a bygone reality.

I want, however, to defend the habit of Sunday clothes, not so much for the practice itself, as for something it signifies which we must recover if we want to give our society some kind of Christian pattern again. I will not uphold the superstition that clothes minus worship can please the Lord or save our souls. But I contend that the habitual attitude to life marked and strengthened by a distinction in outward vesture between Sunday and week-day, is something very close to the secret of Christendom. That cleverish old word-monger, Thomas Carlyle, recognized that clothes were the visible emblems of the fact that *Man is a Spirit* and bound by invisible bonds to *All Men*, and the whole of *Sartor Resartus* is an essay in the effect they have upon our souls. But he dismisses as of no interest in

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half a sentence 'the mere haberdasher Sunday Clothes that men go to Church in'. I am putting in a word even for the Sunday clothes men do *not* go to church in. The reasons are closely connected with what this war is about.

When the Christian Faith burst as a ferment into the disintegrating remnants of the Hebrew Church-State and set about injecting its spiritual serum into the Roman Empire—that is to say when it dissociated itself from a local frame and proclaimed itself a universal gospel—it introduced a tension between sacred and secular which has been the vital principle of Christian Europe. One may almost say that Christian history is the story of a struggle to keep that tension alive, a struggle to prevent either the secular or the sacred aspect of life from being merged in the other and also to hinder any sharp separation of them which would put secular things right outside the sphere of Christian influence.

There have been roughly three phases of the problem and we are now in the thick of the third. From about the eighth to the sixteenth century the Church and the civil ruler, generally represented by Pope and Emperor, kept in check each other's tendency to claim power over the whole of life—with many a critical moment when one party had almost the upper hand. It was a period of struggle between two ideas both of which felt the need for a principle of unity in human existence. And it was this tension which really provided the framework of freedom in European civilization. Freedom is possible only when man has two loyalties which cannot be merged into one.¹ The totalitarian tendencies of modern democracy tend to extinguish freedom because there is no universal allegiance in the soul of man to offset the single claim of popular government, which is always local, and in its present passing phase, national. So I think that Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII) in the eleventh century, while following a dangerous road to priestly absolutism, did in his period make for freedom by setting up a rival universal loyalty to that of the Empire and local kingdom which always aspired to perform both sacred

¹ Cf 'Religion and the State' in *The Recall to Religion* (Eyre and Spottiswoode), p 157 and the interesting study of Hildebrand by Gerd Tellenbach, *Church, State and Society in the Time of the Investiture Contest*

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and secular functions. At the Reformation the division took another form, the Lutheran phase put the secular world quite outside the guidance of the Church, while in its Calvinistic form it sought to turn the world into the Church. In practice both these developments have had the effect of making the tension entirely inward with no visible organization over against the secular power.

But the most terrifying phenomenon of our own day is the totalitarian attempt to do away with the tension altogether by means of a party government which controls all secular and sacred functions in one. As the tension itself is a Christian product this experiment in destroying it must of necessity be pre-Christian or pagan. It is no freak of presumption that makes Hitler see himself as the new Charlemagne, an emperor-priest without Charles-the-Great's Christianity. And it is highly interesting that movements with this kind of 'unitarian' principle have adopted coloured shirts as their symbol. The difference between the Sunday clothes of our parents and the shirts of the parties is a difference between a passive sense that sacred and secular cannot be merged together, and an active movement to make a new unity between them. If this new movement is destructive of freedom, the answer to it is an active, passionate recovery of the proper Christian tension between the two, which does not leave all the practical side of life to the dominance of secular interests, as the last three centuries have done.

That is why I say that what was signified by Sunday clothes is the residue of a Christian pattern of society, even though the wearing of them has been practised by men and women long after they have lost any conscious allegiance to a Christian view of life. And it is most important to realize that any real move towards finding a twentieth-century pattern for a Christian society must not rely only upon conscious and deliberate ideas; it must underpin these by habits that mould the soul below the level of clearly held ideas and resolute decisions. Man is not all the time at his full pitch of awareness. It is what happens to him between his moments of responsible decision that determine the form of his life—and the effectiveness of those decisions. The pattern of a civilization is drawn by the

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little things men have been taught to do every day or week or year; and that civilization is most stable where these things are in line with and not against the deliberate aims of men and society. The dictators know this, but our rather self-conscious modern religion has forgotten it

I plead therefore that education in Christianity shall not despise but use what underlay the pious (in the true sense) habit of distinguishing Sunday from work-days by wearing different clothes. It does not matter that the habit may be no definite mark of a Christian believer or worshipper who understands all that it implies. It represents and reinforces an attitude to life which real Christian awareness cannot do without. This I think is what Mr. T. S. Eliot has expressed in a passage of *The Idea of a Christian Society* which has been badly misunderstood 'In the Christian Community that they (the men of the State) ruled, the Christian faith would be engrained, but it requires as a minimum, only a largely unconscious behaviour; and it is only from the much smaller number of conscious human beings, the Community of Christians, that one would expect a conscious Christian life on its highest social level' (p 28.)

A recovered influence of the Christian Faith upon our modern society requires a renewed distinction between the sacred and secular elements in man's life, for the false merging of the two has weakened not strengthened the spiritualizing force of the Christian Church. *Distinguer pour unir* is the motto M. Maritain has given us. Our Lord spoke of the salt which purifies only when it retains its distinctive savour. This renewed distinction for the sake of a renewed influence is being worked out in the best religions thought of our time; but thought alone will not mould society. There must also be the emotional and rhythmic expression of it in the indeliberate habits of men. Therefore, if Sunday clothes are obsolete some other humdrum expression of the fruitful tension must be cultivated.

XVIII

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I. KNIGHT OF FAITH

The steadily appearing translation in English of Soren Kierkegaard's writings is something more than a literary event, great and excellent as that event is through the enterprise of the Oxford University Press, and its team of first-class translators. The work of this sombre, but withal sprightly genius (1813-1855) is one of the major items in the spiritual chronicle of modern Europe. He wrote in a language and in a land which isolated him from concourse and disputation with his intellectual and spiritual peers. To write in Denmark at that time the most penetrating religious insight was like punching a feather pillow.¹ This struggle in a void, externally, undoubtedly affected Kierkegaard's attitude to his own work, not as an explanation but as a sign that his mission was to show what it meant to live on the edge of the spiritual void. But it was this literary quarantine which also caused a delay of three generations before the outstanding character of his genius was discovered in Europe and America.²

¹ I, who am half a Dane, well remember the kind of *pruderie* with which the name of Kierkegaard was greeted when it came up in Copenhagen society as late as twenty years ago. It seems to me that this embarrassment was a sign not of indignation at his attack on the Danish State Church, but of awareness that his career was a sharp pin-prick even more to the complacency of non-church Denmark.

² 'In the first fifty years of the nineteenth century, the Church returned everywhere with astonishing vitality; and it returned not as morals, or as humanitarianism but as doctrine. There were no Calvins or Dominics or Augustines. The man who was most like these great ones was a Dane. . . . Soren Kierkegaard had to wait for his (world-wide repute) through some seventy years. It has taken Christendom that long to catch him up, it took it fifty years to catch up

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Fear and Trembling, though it cannot be taken as a summary, is in some sense a key to Kierkegaard's thought.¹ Even so, it can be admired for itself, for its poetical grace, its psychological acumen, its terrifying statement of the paradox of faith. In it we find the whole Kierkegaard, artist, moralist, believer, and the dialectic tension of the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious moments, with which he was always wrestling in spirit and in print. But *Fear and Trembling* is a key which can be used to open the door to the febrile mind of its author only with some assistance from his wider prolific output. He himself offered one drop of lubricant for turning the lock when he wrote in his *Journals*.²

Oh, once I am dead—*Fear and Trembling* alone will be enough to immortalize my name. People will shudder at the terrible pathos which the book contains. But when it was written, when the man who was looked upon as the author went about incognito, as a *flâneur* and appeared to be lively and frivolous, wit itself: nobody could grasp its true seriousness. Oh, you fools, never was a book more serious than at that moment. And that was the perfect expression of the terror. . . . But what has already been said in the book is true, where the difference between a poet and a hero is stressed. The poet in me predominates, and yet the mystification really was that *Fear and Trembling* actually reproduces my own life. (Entry 965.)

It has become customary among commentators to take this passage as saying that *Fear and Trembling* was a philosophic and religious veil in which Kierkegaard transparently wrapped his personal tragedy when he broke off his engagement to Regine Olsen. They appeal to a sentence he penned much later: 'If I had had faith, I would have remained with Regine.' It is true that the book is about faith, and that in it faith is declared to be—not resignation, which is only the heroism of

Saint Thomas, and it has not caught up Dante yet.' Charles Williams: *The Descent of the Dove* (Longmans, 1939), p. 212.

¹ Søren Kierkegaard *Fear and Trembling*, translated by Robert Payne (Oxford University Press, 1939).

² *The Journals of Kierkegaard*, 1834–54, translated and edited by Alexander Dru (Oxford University Press, 1938) 25s.

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ethics—but the demand for and the receiving of what has been taken away. And it is also true that his refusal, from an inner compulsion, to fulfil his promise of marriage, with the pain of which he agonized until death, was the central crisis of his life.

But to take this book as a *lettre-de-cachet*, a cryptic apologia for his apparent breach of faith meant for Regine's private understanding, is to admit that Kierkegaard was caught napping. I refuse to believe that his secrecy about his real motive was broken until the *Journals* were published. It was his strenuously maintained purpose that she should think he had behaved meanly to her—for only by belief that she was the generous one would her loss of him and her marriage to another be tolerable to her. If we read *Fear and Trembling* as a mythological discourse on the pathos of the broken engagement much of it appears merely sentimental.

That this tragedy wounded him to the spiritual marrow is undemable, but it was but one thrust of a much bigger catastrophe which is the real problem of Kierkegaard, and to which he sought some answer in the groping after faith. The catastrophe was that a series of compulsions were laid upon him which cast him out of 'the universal' and made him a particular, isolated, individual. He was compelled, as by God, to bear a load of melancholy from birth; it was under God's compulsion that he became engaged and also that he broke it off; he was compelled to receive and to use gifts of genius—so hard to use and be a Christian too—he was compelled to use that genius in an unresponsive and suspicious human environment. He longed again and again to be one with the universal run of men. But he accepted the divine compulsions. And then the question poignantly arose: What is it to be the individual, to be cast out 'of the universal'. Is the casting out also an election? Kierkegaard was pressed from an early age to ask the question: 'Who am I?' which most men who ever ask it never do till they reach the age at which Kierkegaard died.¹

¹ 'Oh what a hard fate, to be as old as eternity makes one when one is a man, before all else a man, and when the whole world speaks to one in the language of youth . . . I was an eternity too old for her.' (*Journals*, Entry 781.)

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To be 'the individual' as Kierkegaard knows it is nothing like the subjective and individualist corruption of liberalism, in which it was considered to be the natural state of man and therefore a temptation to anarchy. To be 'the individual' is terror; it has no standing ground in 'the universal' and is therefore a hard fate. To bear it one must pass beyond the universal disciplines of aesthetics and ethics and arrive at faith. Unlike most men who have come to find their meaning to hang by a thread from God alone, Kierkegaard continually felt the pull of artistic and moral demands. His struggle was that he knew himself to be both poet and moralist, but that as neither of these could he give meaning to 'the individual'. Only as believer could he find it. *Fear and Trembling*, with its title from St. Paul's salvation doctrine is, as he calls it, a dialectical lyric. With superb literary and psychological finesse it discloses the stormy passage from ethics to faith. It has remnants of the jargon of Hegel in whose philosophy Kierkegaard had been bred and from whom he had turned away precisely because Hegel betrayed reality by explaining the particular in terms of its function in the universal. Kierkegaard had found in Job a thundering protest against the sophistries of his friends, the Biblical Hegelians. Now, in *Fear and Trembling* he transcends his debt to Socrates, the superb master of resignation, and chooses to walk with Abraham to Mount Moriah. The book is a meditation on Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, and Kierkegaard opens it with four different tellings of the story each with a poetic stress of its own. Job's faith has been shown to lie not in his resignation. 'The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord,' but in his tears, curses and howlings against fate. But Abraham's faith was a more severe test than Job's; more was demanded of him. It was through foreign forces from outside that Job had been bereft of all his good things; Abraham himself lifted the knife to the child who was to him the most precious thing on earth. Kierkegaard means us not to seek the key of the story in the restoration of Isaac, but in the fact that morally speaking the deed was done and at the bar of ethics Abraham is a murderer.

It is from this point that Kierkegaard develops his philo-

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sophic myth. 'If ethics are supreme Abraham is lost.' Because ethics demand the submission of the individual to a universal law they cannot give reality or meaning to 'the individual'. Faith is the paradox that the incommensurable, the particular, the individual, is in a mode nearer to the source of meaning in God than the general, the universal, the abstract.

'The paradox of faith, then, is that the Individual, recalling a rarely used dogmatic distinction, determines his relation to the universal by his relation to the absolute, and not his relation to the absolute by his relation to the universal.'

Perhaps it was not legitimate for Kierkegaard to take Abraham out of his biblical context in order to typify this paradox, for there was a *universal* recognition in patriarchal society that the father had rights over his children even unto death.¹ Kierkegaard, however, does not lay the stress on the transcendence of the tribal law but upon the abrogation of the universal law that the father should love the son more than himself. Can it be God who desires this sacrifice of him? Yes, just that, and the most heartsearching passages in *Fear and Trembling* are those which construct the dread, the distress and terror for a whole three days with which he accepts that demand.

'Either there exists this paradox that the Individual as the Individual stands in an absolute relation to the Absolute, or Abraham is lost.' But Abraham is the father of Faith, because his story presents 'a teleological suspension of ethics'. Beyond ethics lie both sin and faith. Abraham is either a murderer or a believer. In other works Kierkegaard has declared that the opposite of sin is not virtue, but faith, opposites in the same dimension beyond ethics.

In order to convince us that by religious faith only can the individual dare to transcend the universal demands of ethics, Kierkegaard reiterates the difference between the man of faith and the tragic hero. Agamemnon, Jephthah and Brutus each sacrificed his own flesh and blood. They were tragic heroes. Their action was one of infinite resignation. 'This is the last stage that goes before faith, but it is still within the domain

¹ Theodor Haecker has pointed this out: *Søren Kierkegaard* (Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 16.

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of morality. The individual maims himself in the cause of the universal. The Knight of Faith performs a further movement: 'he likewise renounces in an infinite sense the love which is the content of his life, he is reconciled to suffering, it is then that the miracle happens,' he says. I shall have my love all the same 'by virtue of the absurd, by virtue of the fact that all things are possible to God'. He recognizes the impossibility and in the same moment he believes in the absurd. The absurd is the private relationship with the divinity which the tragic hero does not know; ethics to him is the divine. It is this faith that all things are possible to God, that is the meaning of Isaac's restoration to Abraham and the ram given as surrogate victim.

The character of this faith is no complacent assurance, but a tribulation. It comes out of 'temptation', a trial in fear and trembling, not a temptation which tries to stop a man doing his duty, but a temptation of ethics to prevent him doing God's will. For the Knight of the Faith is always haunted by the doubt, what if ethics are after all supreme, what if Socrates and Hegel are right that the individual is subordinate to the universal. So Kierkegaard tells us that he can understand the tragic hero but cannot understand Abraham, although, 'in an insane sort of way', he admires him more than any other man. He cannot, he says, perform the movement of faith. The infinite movement of resignation can be carried out by any man in his own powers, and whoever does not do so is a coward. He thereby renounces the finite for the infinite. But the Knight of Faith knows that he obtains the finite good by virtue of the absurd.

'By faith I renounce nothing; on the contrary I receive everything. . . . It needs a purely human courage to be able to renounce all temporality in order to gain eternity . . . but it needs the paradox and the most humble courage to seize upon the whole of temporality by virtue of the absurd, and this courage is the courage of faith.'

At this point Kierkegaard's thought passes beyond the domain of communication and it is impossible to make an argument of it. The book closes with a treatise on the fact that

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faith cannot be communicated, for if it could it would come under the category of a universal truth. Hence the secrecy of Abraham to Sarah, to Isaac and to the world. Hence also the secrecy of Kierkegaard himself to those who clamoured most for an explanation, Regine Olsen, his friends and the Danish public. *Fear and Trembling* is an allegory written with deliberate intent in indirect speech.¹

It is now perhaps possible to see why Kierkegaard has such a real piquancy in the religious thought of our time. He represents a recall to religion in terms of dogma and faith, addressed to an age bored with a rancid moralism cut off from its religious roots. He is the originator of that 'existential' philosophy and theology which places man by his actual existence in relation to reality closer than that which he realizes through his attempt to comprehend it by general ideas. Philosophically his work has contributed a stimulus to the thought of Heidegger and Jaspers, and in theology to the 'existential' teaching of Karl Barth. By his insistence that man in his actual existence is as much a creature in doubt, struggle and tribulation as he is a being craving for certainty, he has close links with Dostoyevski and contemporary Russians like Chestov (recently dead) and Berdyayev.² 'The subject', the inner mystery of you and me, of Tom, Dick and Harry, is a much more ultimate reality than any general ideas about man. In that inner mystery is the dimension in which man stands in relation to God who is absolute subject.³

The main reason, however, why the voice of Kierkegaard is being listened for in Europe many years after his death is that we to-day are confronted on all hands with the demons of the irrational. In society men feel themselves in the throes of irrational forces which they have unsuccessfully hoped to cope with rationally: unemployment, mechanized meaninglessness, nationalisms, bombs, poison gas, wars that conform to no rational pattern. Totalitarian politics find their sanctions

¹ Cf. Leon Chestov: *Kierkegaard et la Philosophie Existentielle* (Paris, J. Vrin), chap. v.

² Cf. Chestov, op. cit., *En Guise d'Introduction, Kierkegaard et Dostoyevski*.

³ See N. Berdyayev: *Spirit and Reality* (Geoffrey Bles).

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in the irrational and blind biological urges of life. Literature reflects the *homme chaos* whose real problems were left outside the liberal and classical thought modes. Perceptive spirits eagerly turn to those who, like Kierkegaard, have looked at the demons unflinchingly and can yet remain sane.

At the same time Kierkegaard represents a moment in the dialectical fulness of Christianity which must be recognized as a moment and not as the whole. The ever-renewed vitality of the faith—which is always dying according to the world and the despairing Christians—consists in the tension between its theology of affirmation and its theology of negation. 'This also is Thou—This is not Thou.' The natural life speaks of God, and yet it separates man from God. Aquinas built his theology on the first—Luther on the second. Both moments are in dialectical interaction in Augustine. Kierkegaard is on the line which proceeds from Augustine, through Luther and Pascal, the line of those for whom 'knowledge and love of God is over and against all other knowledge and love'.¹ 'Before God man is always in the wrong.' But there are also in Kierkegaard the other notes which are heard in him as occasional overtones, whereas in the theologians of the 'affirmative way' they make the central melody. Kierkegaard's quest for purity of heart and mind, and his sublime religiousness, at which this article has hardly hinted, are the final impression his prolific gifts as an author leaves upon us. 'God is that which demands absolute love.' And while he drags us wriggling towards the abyss where he compels us to look at the tremendous opposition between the divine and the human, his greatness lies in the fact that there is in him also the contrasted note which rings out only at rare intervals. 'Christianity is the perfection of the really human.'

II. THE INDIVIDUAL AS A RELIGIOUS CATEGORY

To many men of creative power there arrives a time, in middle-life or later, when each becomes aware of himself as the single source of all he does or utters. It is the moment

¹ See the interesting essay 'St. Augustine and the Modern World' by Rich Przywara, S. J. in *A Monument to St. Augustine* (Sheed and Ward).

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when a writer, especially if he has been prolific and his work varied, after being lost up to then in his output, begins to find himself in it. He discovers a unity in all his interests; he feels himself to be a real *subject*; he becomes an *author*. And to some of these that moment arrives with a question before¹ unasked, what is it to be the individual? and that is always the question, what is it to be *this* individual, this unity at the centre of multifarious interests?

Sometimes this advent of self-consciousness is the beginning of decline, as it has been with G. B. Shaw, more often it works itself out demurely in autobiography. But for a man here and there it brings an agony which can only be borne and bear further fruit if it is taken as integral to the cosmic purpose. 'The individual' then becomes a religious category.

This was pre-eminently the case of Søren Kierkegaard. At thirty-five years old, an unusually early age for the discovery, in 1848, he put on record for publication one of the most searching and engaging expressions of literary self-consciousness in existence. This has now been translated from the Danish with the title: 'The Point of View for my Work as an Author' and published along with his 'Christian Discourses', in the handsome English edition of the works made by the Oxford University Press and its excellent team of translators.¹

'The Point of View' is a disclosure made at the moment when Kierkegaard abandoned what he calls the indirect method which marked his 'aesthetic' and pseudonymous writings. From then onwards he was to give direct communication, and his writing would make no concealment that all the time he had been 'a religious author' and his subject simply 'how to become a Christian'. The transition is described as that from reflection to immediacy or from the interesting to the simple. With consummate artistic craft (in both senses) and sensitive self-analysis he tells how there had to be a period of 'duplicity' in which the religious purpose was concealed in the aesthetic interest.

'If then, according to our assumption, the greater number of

¹ *The Point of View* (7s. 6d.) and *Christian Discourses* (21s. 6d.). By Søren Kierkegaard. Translated by Walter Lowrie (Humphrey Milford, The Oxford University Press.)

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people in Christendom only imagine themselves to be Christians, in what categories do they live? They live in æsthetic or, at most, æsthetic-ethical categories. . . . The religious writer must, therefore, first begin with æsthetic achievement. . . . Moreover, he must relate himself to God in fear and trembling lest the event most opposite to his intentions should come to pass, and instead of setting the others in motion, the others acquire power over him and he ends by being bogged in the æsthetic. . . . It is important that religion should not be introduced either too soon or too late. If too long a time elapses, the illusion gains ground that the æsthetic writer has become older and hence religious. If it comes too soon, the effect is not violent enough.'

Perhaps there is some retrospective illusion here; looking back, Kierkegaard could see that he had to become a religious author; but how much conscious covering of the divine hook with humanist bait there was all through the earlier period is doubtful. What is beyond doubt is that the problem in wrestling with which he became 'a spy in the higher service', was with him from the beginning. It was the problem, what is it to be the individual, to be cast out of the universal, to be *this* man. The inherited melancholia, the inner compulsion of the engagement to Regine Olsen, the compulsion of its having to be broken, the gift of genius, the fate of intellectual and spiritual isolation in Denmark—these facts produced a profound sense of his being outside the general category of men. Instead of bemoaning the pain of this scandal of particularity, Kierkegaard gripped it and came to terms with it, and to do that meant that he came to regard it as an 'election' which would only be understood by Christian Faith. To be the individual is to be that which God wills him to be. As he put it in the earlier pseudonymous work, 'Fear and Trembling'. 'The paradox of faith, then, is that the individual determines his relation to the universal by his relation to the absolute, and not his relation to the absolute by his relation to the universal.' This is still the language of philosophy. In 'The Point of View', it becomes 'To God as the decisive factor corresponds the individual. If the "race" is to be the court of last resort or even have subordinate jurisdiction, Christianity is abolished.'

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Kierkegaard was moralist and poet as well as man of faith. But the ethical and aesthetic categories had to be left behind when faith made its full demands, for they are general categories of human expression. This abandonment of two disciplines in which he enjoyed a masterful dexterity for the role of an educator in Christianity, *tout pur*, need not be taken as a perverse triumph of the intransigent and fanatical spirit, though there are traces that Kierkegaard was touched by such a spirit. The fact is that he had detected a demonic temptation in aesthetic concealment of the religious aim. Now 'I lose the interesting distinction of being an enigma, seeing it is impossible to know whether this thoroughgoing defence of Christianity is not a covert attack most cunningly conceived'.

The 'Christian Discourses' represent direct religious writing, some of the pieces having been actually delivered in church. The earlier ones depict with exquisite grace the Christian's liberation from anxiety, on the theme of the Lilies and the Birds, which recurs again and again. The whole book is a series of meditations on the freedom won by absolute surrender. What the bird has by nature - it never sees 'the next day' - the believer has by the grace of God. 'All earthly and worldly anxiety is at bottom anxiety for the next day. Earthly and worldly anxiety is rendered possible by the fact that man, compounded of the temporal and the eternal, became a self; but in becoming a self the next day became existent for him. And here it is fundamentally that the battle is fought. . . . How rare it is for a man to be contemporary with himself. . . . heathenism is precisely self-torment on account of the next day.' There appear throughout these sensitively confident discourses the scars of the struggle which marked the author's path, as when he writes on 'Silence':

'The poet is the child of eternity, but he lacks the seriousness of eternity. When he thinks of the birds and the lilies he weeps, and in spite of weeping he finds in weeping relief, the wish comes into being—O would I were a bird. . . . But if one were to say to him in accordance with the Gospel: "This is seriousness, precisely this is seriousness, that the bird seriously is a teacher!" then the poet might laugh. . . . But the Gospel dares to command that he *shall* be as the birds.'

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It is beyond the powers of a comment on this scale to give more than a hawker's sample of what Kierkegaard means by the faith which gives a man the power to live in the conscious present, which is his standing before the eternal God. These discourses are the early fruits of winning the struggle to know what it is to be the individual. That struggle is the transition from the attitude of all other knowledge in which the general is the mediator between the individual and the absolute, to religious faith wherein the individual is the mediator between God and the universal.

For Kierkegaard 'the individual' is the Christian category *par excellence*. It has nothing to do with the solipsistic and individualist corruption of liberalism, in which the individual was an atom abstracted from the general. The man of faith knows he stands at the meeting point where the eternal pierces into the temporal order. He becomes then truly one with other men, for each man is a particular man. 'It is only religion', he writes in the preface to 'The Two Notes on That Individual' appended to 'The Point of View',

'that can with the help of eternity, carry human equality to the utmost limit—the godly, the essential, the non-worldly, the true, the only possible human equality. And, therefore (be it said to its honour and glory), religion is the true humanity.'

There is a real danger in this utter inwardness if it is taken as the sole dimension of Christianity. Equality must be known in this way, but unless in proper measure it becomes externalized in institutions, it will become the meat of spiritual vanity and ethical callousness. Kierkegaard represents the full flowering of protestant spirituality, and it is inevitable that he should stress this side of the religious dialectic. And perhaps it is in the divine dispensation that nearly a century after he lived he should be listened to with religious avidity in England and America. His own country is now under the heel of the most formidably organized suppression of the spirit, which has put its stamp on all nations. And if the political life of the West again finds its liberation it will only be through the struggle to embody outwardly that freedom which circumstances now compel us to find first within.

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III. TO BELIEVE OR TO TAKE OFFENCE

Kierkegaard wrote in his *Journal*: 'Oh, when they preach about Job people always hurry on to the conclusion, to the fact that he received all things again twofold. To me it seems strange to preach on that point. For surely, once that has happened you will be quite ready to take his place. That is why I like most of all to preach on all that went before.' In *Fear and Trembling* he insisted on looking at Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac apart from the anti-climax of the substitute victim. In another book¹ he performs a similar act of spiritual surgery with the Gospels. He bids us hear the words of Christ as his contemporaries heard them, shutting off from our minds all that we may hold to be the good results of Christianity or that the believer knows of the Easter triumph and the reign at the right hand of the Father. Kierkegaard was himself a believer in the deity of Jesus Christ, that is he held that Christ belongs to the other side of the line which separates creator from creature. And he will not have the paradox of faith softened by signs of the divinity coming as a happy ending to the story of the humiliated humanity. Faith is conviction of the deity in the humiliation: it is the following of Christ there, without support from knowledge of the exaltation and the glory.

The book contains discourses on three texts, each introduced by the same preface admitting that the requirements set forth in them are not fulfilled, and that 'what is said is addressed solely to me—that I may learn not only to take refuge in "grace", but to take refuge in such a way as to make use of "grace".' In fact, however, the book is addressed, through the author, to the Church and to the Danish State Church in particular of a century ago, of which he was a regular attendant and a frequent lay preacher. This is one of the last writings of Kierkegaard to appear as a book; there followed a pamphleteering attack on the Church for its refusal to make the acknowledgement made in the preface that one does not fulfil the requirements of being a Christian.

¹ *Travelling in Christianity* By Søren Kierkegaard Translated by Walter Lowrie (Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press.) 12s. 6d.

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The discourses on *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest* ring the changes on the teaching that the Inviter is the humiliated, rejected Christ, and that the invited, of his own and all following generations, are his contemporaries, 'for in relation to the absolute there is only one tense: the present.' Kierkegaard reiterates that Christianity has been done away with because men and churches have refused to receive this invitation from the suffering, humiliated Christ and have sought to justify him from the goodness or beauty of his life or from the persistence of teaching in his name.

'The brilliant consequences (especially upon closer inspection) turn out to be a shabby sort of glory, at all events entirely incongruous, about which faith never speaks when it speaks of His glory. . . . It is not He that, after letting Himself be born, and making His appearance in Judea, has presented Himself for examination in history; it is He that is the Examiner, His life is the examination, and that not alone for that race or generation, but for the whole race. Woe to the generation that dared to say, Let now all this injustice He suffered be forgotten, history has now made manifest Who He was and reinstated Him in His rights.'

From this comes the possibility of offence, which is the subject of the second set of discourses on the words *Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me*. The key passage for this exposition is Matthew xiii. 21, *when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he is offended*. The emphasis lies upon 'because of the word'. Kierkegaard says that he has listened to many sermons which identify these tribulations with illness, financial difficulties, anxiety for the future. 'About these one preaches Christianly; weeps humanly, and one crazily connects them with Gethsemane. In case it were through these many tribulations one enters into the Kingdom of Heaven, the heathen must enter the Kingdom of Heaven for they also pass through the same.' No, Christ is speaking of the man who is offended when tribulations and persecutions arise *because of the word*, when they overtake a man *because* he has recourse to Christ for help. That is the possibility of

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offence: the opposite of faith is to take offence, but faith must pass through the possibility of offence. For Kierkegaard the possibility of offence is not only the ill treatment meted out to Christians, but the burden and torment of belief itself. The blessing is not to be found by the understanding through any evidences of consolation. 'What is there in it, then?' asks the understanding. 'The answer is, "Nothing"— it is an expression of the fact that the absolute exists. But this is precisely what offends the understanding.'

He returns to this theme again in discoursing on *I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me*. To suffer in likeness with Christ does not mean to encounter the unavoidable with patience, but it means to suffer because one is a Christian, so that one could avoid the suffering by ceasing to will the good. There are severe indictments of admirers of Christ and preachers who propose 'reflections' instead of being followers, of the Church which aspires to be triumphant instead of militant in this world, of those whose action differs in nothing from the world and delude themselves with the 'hidden inwardness' of their faith, and above all of those who betray Christianity by defending it.

The whole has a haunting beauty and terror, betraying an acutely sensitive and remorseless self-analysis and exquisite exegetical gift. It seeks to drive the reader to find truth, consolation and forgiveness only on the yon side of utter despair, in a faith that is bare of all grounds of belief. If an anti-clerical disgusted with the Church's neglect of his pet reform were to hope for an ally in this castigator of state-church and established order, he would meet a sharp rebuff in Kierkegaard's charge that to seek proof in results is blasphemy. And at a time like this when Christians are feverishly seeking to commend their faith by applying it, and when this turns out to be much more 'application' than Christianity, it is salutary to have the pristine paradox of Christian belief heightened to the extreme. But Kierkegaard has not avoided the danger in this proceeding of bringing about a result opposite to the one intended.

This astonishing man pulled to its highest strain the truth of the utter creaturely dependence of man upon God; and he taught that only in this relation to the Transcendent does

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man find that he is an individual! (For if he is not related directly to the Transcendent he is related only to the whole, the mass, the world and then he is not an individual.) This is Kierkegaard's greatest contribution to his age and ours. But it must be understood in his own terms. the relation to the Transcendent is the relation to the man Jesus Christ. 'He is heterogeneous from every other individual man.' When it comes to the nature of this relation, which is faith, Kierkegaard tears away one by one every thing that would draw man to the Saviour; there is left not the finest spiderthread by which the Creator has a pull upon the consciousness of the creature. He heightens to the uttermost all that repels man from Christ, with some violence to the Gospel figure. But this all means that the act of faith is induced by nothing which calls man out of himself; it becomes a choice the believer makes, dependent upon nothing that comes to him. Look at the remarkable passage which speaks of the God-man as the sign of contradiction which reveals the heart. 'A contradiction placed directly in front of man—if only one can get him to look upon it—is a mirror; while he is judging, what dwells within him must be revealed. The contradiction puts before him a choice, and while he is choosing he himself is revealed.' The teaching of utter dependence swings over to that of man's decision taken on no grounds whatever. It is an act of the unconditioned will. This result is an example of the fate of all teaching tinged with Lutheran *de servo arbitrio*; it reverts to its opposite, the independent will. Miss Dorothy Emmet has no difficulty in showing in a study of Kierkegaard (*Philosophy*, July 1941) that modern continental irresponsible politics and the theology of their protestant opponents have the same root, a way of thinking which puts bare decision above any objective or universal norm by which it can be judged.

But anyone who follows Kierkegaard up to the point at which he stretches his bow so taut that it swings round and shoots the other way will be prodded by the beauty of his evangelical perception to know why he is a believer or why he does not want to be.

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